

"W O M E N I N G E R M A N S O C I E T Y ,
1930-1940"

by

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Thesis submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

University of Edinburgh

1974



I declare that the content of this thesis is my own,
original work.



SUMMARY

The aim of this thesis is to describe and discuss some aspects of the status of, and opportunities for, women in Germany in the years between the impact on Germany of the world economic crisis, which followed on the Wall Street crash in October 1929, and the early years of the Second World War, when the German army was still victorious and the Nazi regime was attempting to wage war with only a partial war economy. The significance of the year 1933, with the Nazi takeover of power, in this decade is inescapable; but it is increasingly clear that many of the political, economic and social policies pursued by the Nazis when in Government were pre-figured in developments conceived and even set in train in the last years of the Weimar Republic, often as a direct result of the depression and its effects. The most serious of these, the massive unemployment in Germany in the early 1930s, did much to condition attitudes to the position of women, particularly with regard to their employment - in manual and professional occupations alike - outside the home. Nazi ideology indeed affected policies concerning women, but it was conveniently in tune with the needs and the mood of the time; thus, for a short time Nazi ideology seemed to have practical application, in providing justification for the provision of jobs for men at the expense of women. This situation rapidly changed, as full employment was achieved, and a shortage of labour became Germany's problem in the later 1930s, particularly once war broke out in September 1939. Then, a conflict developed between the Party ideologues and the men in charge of day-to-day Government, a conflict which was resolved in favour of the former in 1941, no doubt partly because women were reluctant to provide the labour which was badly needed.

The depression, Nazi ideology, and the build-up to a partial war economy affected policies towards women not only in employment of all kinds but also in the realm of higher education. The broad categories into which this work falls therefore include higher education and senior schooling, as well as employment outside the home and, particularly, the professions. Since attitudes in these areas were partly conditioned by, and partly conditioned, attitudes towards the position of women in the family, particularly as child-bearers, some discussion of marriage and morals is included. The part played by the women's organisations in the Imperial and Republican periods necessitates some brief discussion of them, while the Nazis' attempt to organise German women - with a marked lack of success - must also be considered. Naturally, many omissions remain; this work cannot claim to be a comprehensive social history of women in the 1930s.

The points which are of most general interest here are the continuity of policy from about 1930 to 1935/36, in spite of - or perhaps because of - the assumption of power by the Nazis, the failure of the Nazis to institute a fully totalitarian regime largely because of their dependence on positive support from the people, and the conflict between Party and State. With regard particularly to women, it is clear that while equality of rights and equality of opportunity were not achieved in the Weimar years, enough progress was made in securing a place for women in employment generally, in the professions and in higher education, for attempts at discrimination against them - before as well as after 1933 - to fail to have significant effect. The net result of the 1930s was, in fact, to consolidate their position in these areas, once the Nazis' immediate political and foreign ambitions necessitated an increase in personnel

in them in the later 1930s. This was in spite of the Nazis' overwhelming obsession with the birth rate, which led at first to attempts to remove women from activity outside the home, and then to preoccupation with providing for the welfare of employed women. Connected with this, the 1930s also witnessed a reversal of the post-war tendency to underestimate the contribution to the life of the nation of the full-time housewife and mother. For "Aryan", "politically reliable" German women, then, the Nazi regime brought some benefit, and the disadvantages experienced by women were very often those which men, too, suffered. But benefit and disadvantage alike were conditioned not by the needs or desires of individual Germans or of groups of Germans; the needs of the State, as interpreted by the Nazi Party, and particularly by Hitler, had primacy in every area of policy.

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Acknowledgments

The idea of studying the position of women in Germany between the wars was suggested to me by Mr. Esmonde Robertson, formerly of Edinburgh University, now of the London School of Economics. For his advice and great kindness to me, especially in the early years of this work, I am most grateful. I should also like to thank Professor V. G. Kiernan of the University of Edinburgh, who succeeded Mr. Robertson as my supervisor. Dr. J. S. Conway, of the University of British Columbia, Professor Arthur Marwick, formerly of Edinburgh University, now of the Open University, and Mr. A. J. Nicholls, of St. Antony's College, Oxford, gave me valuable advice and encouragement at critical points. The staff of various libraries and archives have been most helpful and friendly, and I should like to mention particularly those of the Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, the Berlin Document Center, the Institut für Zeitgeschichte, Munich, and, especially, the Wiener Library in London. In addition, the obvious is worth stating: Edinburgh University's Library and its staff have been a constant source of support throughout these last eight years. On the more personal level, the encouragement and support of my parents enabled me to embark on this project in comfort, while more recently my husband has tolerated the domestic regime which has enabled me to write this thesis. Its content, and consequently its shortcomings, are, of course, my responsibility alone.

PREFACE

Remarkably little of substance has been written about the position of women in Germany in the inter-war years. The Weimar years are particularly neglected, with only occasional references to women's status, and those chiefly as parentheses. The major exception to this is a panegyric by an American, Hugh Wiley Puckett, called Germany's Women Go Forward; this was published in 1930 and gives some idea of developments after the Great War. The leaders of the middle-class Women's Movement wrote a history of their campaigns, but this is chiefly concerned with the period before 1914. The relevant chapters of Werner Thönnessen's Frauenemanzipation are particularly thin in a work on Social Democratic women which is generally sketchy. For Nazi Germany, there is an interesting and competent, but purely descriptive account of the years up to 1936, in Clifford Kirkpatrick's Woman in Nazi Germany, which was first published in the United States in 1938. There were also numerous pamphlets produced by the Nazis themselves, and by Communists in Britain and abroad; both these sources are useful, but they can hardly be termed reliable, the Nazis, naturally, painting an idyllic picture of their ideology in practice, of their rescue of women from the degradation of the Weimar system, and the Communists extravagantly claiming that the Nazis had enslaved women, distorting the picture to fit their own rigid ideology.

In recent years there has been an upsurge of interest in the history of female emancipation and the Women's Movement, no doubt partly at least as an accompaniment to the rising feminism, or "women's lib", of the 1960s and 1970s. The most recent product of this has been the thesis by Dr. Richard Evans on the feminist movement in

Germany up to 1919, which in some respects forms a useful introduction to this thesis. Before that, Dr. David Schoenbaum had included a colourful but haphazard chapter on women in the Third Reich in his thesis, subsequently published as Hitler's Social Revolution, Richard Grunberger had produced an entertaining but often inaccurate chapter on women in his generally suspect Social History of the Third Reich, and Joachim Fest had written about Die Deutsche Frau und Mutter, a piece more about ideology than social analysis, in what is now in English The Face of the Third Reich. Each of these has its points of interest but none gives a coherent picture of the position of women in the Third Reich, nor even of any aspect of it. Thus, relatively little is known about the position of women in Germany in the 1920s and 1930s, although a substantial corpus of mythology exists.

It is the aim of this work to describe and discuss some aspects of the status of, and opportunities for, women in Germany in the years 1930 to 1940. This period forms a logical unit whose bounds are the impact of the world economic crisis on Germany and the Nazi regime's attempt to wage war with only a partial war economy, while the German army is still victorious. To have tried to cover the years of the Second World War would have been unwise, for two reasons: it would have added substantially to the size of a work that is already large; and it would have introduced a disproportionate amount of material which referred to a highly abnormal situation, one which the Nazis saw as an interruption of their domestic policy, but one which was necessary if this was ever to be implemented. To have drawn to a close in 1939, with the outbreak of war, would not, however, have been much more satisfactory, since trends which were apparent then,

and which had manifested themselves even earlier, can be conveniently followed into the first full year of the war, and largely left there because the failure to defeat or make peace with Germany's only remaining foe, Britain, meant that the ad hoc arrangements made in 1939-40 for war production, and the gearing of society to a war situation on a temporary basis, would have to be transformed into a longer-term system.

Within the decade 1930 to 1940, the significance of the year 1933 is inescapable; the appointment of Adolf Hitler as German Chancellor on 30 January and the rapid progress towards the creation of a one-party State, effected in July 1933, had far-reaching implications for all Germans. But to have begun this work in 1933 would have been to neglect - as others have done - the vital last years of the Weimar Republic, when trends were already apparent in many aspects of economic and social, as well as political, development which were to be intensified, or, more often, distorted after the Machtübernahme (Nazi assumption of power). The year 1933 continues to hold a magnetic attraction for Germans and for historians of Germany; to this extent, Nazi propaganda has been highly successful, since it was the Nazis themselves who first depicted 1933 as a great turning-point in German history, as the year of "the national awakening".

Indeed, the events of 1933 heralded changes in every aspect of German life; but these were conditioned by German traditions and experience as well as by Nazi ideology. It is not, in any case, easy to gauge the significance of Nazi policies without some knowledge of what they replaced. Study of developments in the last years before the Nazi

takeover, particularly from 1930, reveals that there is a strong degree of continuity in German domestic policy in the years 1930 to 1935/36. It has long been realised that "the descent into dictatorship" began even under the Brüning Government, with resort to the use of Article 48 of the Weimar Constitution resulting in the overriding of the parliamentary system by Presidential decree, but there has been little attempt to investigate whether this trend in the political sphere is paralleled in economic and social policy¹. One of the major themes of this work is that there was continuity in domestic policy in the first half of the 1930s, in spite of the momentous events of 1933, simply because of the cataclysmic and all-pervading effect of the world economic crisis, which began in autumn 1929, on Germany. The changes which took place in 1935/36 are indicative of two factors: by this time, the Nazis had made their medium-term plans, and were beginning to implement them within the context of their long-term aims; but at least as important is the end of the depression, and the consequent end to the emergency measures initiated to alleviate its effects, particularly the massive unemployment which had been its chief characteristic.

To say this is not to deny that the position of women was affected by the coming to power of a Party which, indeed, had very fixed ideas about the role women should play in the life of the nation. But before the Nazis came to power the position of women in Germany had already been deeply affected by the economic crisis which had thrown

1. Christoph Führ, "Schulpolitik im Spannungsfeld zwischen Reich und Ländern: Das Scheitern der Schulreform in der Weimarer Republik", Das Parlament, 17 October, 1970, makes some interesting points about continuity in educational policy in the late Weimar and early Nazi period.

millions of people in manual, clerical, managerial and professional positions out of work. It was the condition of the labour market - with the gradual but consistent reduction of unemployment figures from 1933, to a situation where there was, in the later 1930s, a shortage of labour which became acute in 1940 - which was undoubtedly the single most influential factor in the development of attitudes to and opportunities for women in wage and salary-earning positions outside the home. Its impact went far beyond the narrow employment situation, affecting also educational policy and official attitudes to women in the family context, and brought Nazi theory about women's role into sharp conflict with the needs of the German economy, in its widest sense, in the later 1930s, particularly once Germany was at war.

The broad sections into which this work falls therefore include the position of women within marriage and family life, the employment of women outside the home, and educational and professional opportunities for women. The part played by women's organisations in campaigning for better opportunities for women throughout the period of the Empire and the Republic necessitates some brief discussion of them, while the energy expended on trying to build up a massive organisation of women to guide them towards activities approved of, and indeed arranged by, the Nazi party justifies the inclusion of a chapter on "The Nazi Organisation of Women". Limitations of space have led to the relative or even complete neglect of aspects of the subject which may seem important, and for which material is available; for example, it has not been possible to include more than passing references to the girls' branch of the Hitler Youth, the Bund deutscher Mädel, while the Labour Service could have received a far more detailed

treatment than it has in Chapter 3. Only fleeting mention is made of social mores, although the position of the unmarried mother is discussed in Chapter Two, and nothing is said about the contribution of women - like Ricarda Huch and Käthe Kollwitz, for example - to the cultural life of the Weimar Republic. The day-to-day life of the working-class woman is alluded to at times, but not described in any systematic way. Particularly in the chapters on education and the professions, the emphasis is on a very small minority of German women indeed. But it was in these two areas that questions of women's rights and opportunities were most alive, in Germany as in other European countries and North America. If the women affected by reforms in these areas even now constitute only a larger minority, it is nevertheless true that achievements there have eventually opened up questions of equality for women generally, in the legal, economic and social contexts.

With regard to the 1930s themselves, it has been firmly asserted, and equally firmly believed, that the assumption of power by the Nazis meant a complete transformation in the position of women, and a transformation for the worse. Writing in January 1934, Alice Hamilton, an American doctor, asserted, on the basis of her own observations and information from inside Germany, that

"German women had had a long and hard fight but they had won a fair measure of equality under the Republic. Now all seems to be lost and suddenly they are set back, perhaps as much as a hundred years"¹.

This was very much the kind of picture that tended to be given by those who had emigrated from Germany in and after 1933 for political

1. Alice Hamilton, "Woman's Place in Germany", Survey Graphic, January 1934, p. 26.

reasons¹. But it is an accurate representation of neither the situation between the end of the Great War and 1933 nor that after 1933. The "fair measure of equality" achieved in the 1920s was, as disgruntled feminists and socialists constantly complained during the Weimar years, enshrined in the Constitution of 1919, but not in the law of the land. The provisions of the Civil Code of the Empire, which became effective in 1900, had given men decisive superiority within the marriage relationship, and while legislation was not forthcoming to implement the clauses of the Weimar Constitution which declared, for example, that both parents should have responsibility for the upbringing of their children, they remained purely pious affirmations of intent, without any legal effect. And while it was no doubt reasonable to assume from Nazi utterances before 1933 that in the Third Reich women would be sent back to the home en masse, the fact is that the Nazis, like any other party, found that proclaiming ideology in the safety of opposition was one thing, but that when they were put in the position of exercising power circumstances which were partly beyond their control, partly of their own making, obliged them to modify, and in some cases to abandon, previously-formulated policy. Thus they found that during the Second World War they had to try to persuade married women and even mothers to go out to work, and not devote themselves entirely to home and family - the role deemed most suitable for women in Nazi theory.

There is a risk in trying to revise earlier views of an historical phenomenon like National Socialism: a recent reviewer

1. E.g., Judith Grunfeld, "Women Workers in Nazi Germany", Nation, 13 March, 1937. The author was an active member of the SPD in Germany up to 1933.

expressed concern that revision might lead to a softening of attitudes towards this most evil of movements¹. Thus, the difficulty in pointing out where critics of the Nazis have been in error, and especially where they have wrongly attributed bad or philistine policies to them, is that one may be suspected of consciously or unconsciously defending the Nazis. To try to avoid this, I must therefore now assert that I do not believe that it is possible to defend those who ruled Germany between 1933 and 1945. We all know that they committed the most heinous crimes, of courting and causing a long and terrible war which brought death or immense suffering to millions of people throughout the world, and of treating with revolting and unspeakable brutality certain minorities, especially the Jews, for whom they nurtured an implacable and irrational hatred. Recognition of this makes it impossible for us to regard any aspect of Nazism dispassionately, and rightly so, I believe. But this should not place a taboo on analysing parts of the Nazi system in a methodical way; to explain it is not to justify it. I say this because at various places in this work I am obliged to state or to imply that "this aspect of Nazi policy brought some benefit to women" or "the Nazis did not initiate this policy which was disadvantageous to women". To make such remarks, within highly restricted areas of discussion, is not to say that the net result of Nazi policies towards women was favourable, nor is it to say that the motives behind any apparently beneficial actions were benevolent.

Some understanding of basic Nazi beliefs and aims is essential

1. Gordon Brook-Shepherd, "More Noises from the Bunker", Sunday Telegraph, 15 July, 1973, says "How can you reassess Hitler except upwards?"

to a discussion of their policies towards any group in society, in this case the female sex. From the hotch-potch that was Nazi ideology, the following assumptions consistently emerge. In the first place, the traditional divisions of class and creed were superseded by the fundamental division - in the Nazi view - of race. The Nazi leaders genuinely and fanatically believed that Jews, Slavs and the coloured peoples were inferior types of being; had they been less sincere in this belief, they might have been less dangerous. As it was, they claimed that the "Aryan" race, to which those of German stock belonged, had, in order to protect and preserve itself, to use every means at its disposal to destroy these "inferior peoples" before they destroyed the "Aryan" race. The inherent malevolence of non-"Aryans" towards the "Aryan" race was accepted as the logical corollary of their inferiority.

To further the survival of the race most fitted for leadership, physical exercise became a cult, while strength and "Nordic" features became vital attributes. Quality, in this sense, was not, however, enough; in order to overcome the teeming hordes of these "inferior peoples", the relatively small numbers of the "Aryan" race would have to be increased, urgently and on a huge scale. It was this obsessive line of thought, absolutely basic to the Nazi Weltanschauung (philosophy of life), which conditioned the Party's attitude to the role of women, since women are the child-bearers of a nation. Men, as the other half of the genetic equation, were by no means exempt from official concern in this context: they were exhorted to marry young, and even, if they were public employees, threatened with being passed over for promotion if they did not marry

and start a family¹. But women's biological function made her much more the focus of the concern of the Nazi leaders in questions of population policy. This applied only, of course, to the "Aryan" race; women of other races could be worked to death or tortured in concentration camps, while intricate legislation was prepared to protect the reproductive capacity of "Aryan" women. It was, after all, not at all desirable, in the Nazi view, that non-"Aryans" should procreate, since this only increased in number the enemies of the "Aryan" race. For this reason, it was pointed out in 1939 that the strict prohibition of abortion did not apply to Jews².

Within the "Aryan" race, the primary division was that of sex, providing two complementary, not antagonistic, elements which each played a predetermined part in the gigantic jig-saw which was the life of the Volksgemeinschaft (national community). As Frau Scholtz-Klink, leader of the Nazi women's organisation, told some of its members in 1936, "the guiding principle of German women to-day is not to campaign against men but to campaign alongside men"³. While men very definitely played the leading role in the Nazi State, with women excluded from political life, the Nazis did not accept that they were subordinating women completely to men; rather, they claimed, they were drawing a distinction - the natural distinction - between the areas of activity of men and women, so that each sex might better perform its function for the good of the nation. This insistence on the separation of the

1. "Der Beamte soll frühzeitig heiraten", Westdeutscher Beobachter, 3 August, 1937.
2. BA, NSD30/vorl. 1836, Informationsdienst..., March 1939, "Anwendung nur auf das deutsche Volk".
3. "Die Aufgaben der deutschen Frau", VB, 27 May, 1936.

sexes is a crucial feature of Nazi policy towards women, in all areas of life. The sexes, then, were to come together only for the most important function of all, that of procreation. The Nazis turned to the ancient Teutonic relationship - or, at least, what they thought it had been - where man was the warrior and woman the homemaker. They claimed that civilisation, especially in industrial society, had undermined the relationship between the sexes by altering the "natural" roles of man and woman, and held that the differences between the sexes should not be denied or ignored, but gladly accepted, and indeed emphasised.

In the Nazi view, the chief difference was that man was essentially productive, and woman fundamentally reproductive¹. By the same token, man was creative while woman was imitative. Thus, woman's position in Nazi society was to be one which gave her the chance to exhibit her "natural" qualities - sympathy, self-sacrifice and comradeship, rather than demanding of her the "unnatural" attributes of independence, intellectual ability or a competitive spirit. Following from this, then, the Nazis were at once ideologically opposed to the employment of women outside the home, to more than a very limited amount of academic education for girls, and, above all, to feminists and all proponents of equal rights for women who, they claimed, treated the sexes as identical when they were rather "gleichwertig aber nicht gleichartig" (equivalent but not the same)².

1. Elfriede Eggener, "Die organische Eingliederung der Frau in den nationalsozialistischen Staat", doctoral dissertation for Leipzig University, 1938, p. 24.
2. "Die Geschlechter im Dritten Reich", Fränkische Tageszeitung, 17 April, 1934.

"Dies aber ist die 'Lady'", Das Schwarze Korps, 2 May, 1940.

In matters relating to women in society, then, the Nazis were diametrically opposed to all that the liberals and socialists, both men and women, had campaigned for before 1918 and had continued to support in the 1920s. The franchise, too often regarded as itself constituting emancipation, was the symbol of the struggle to win equal rights for women, and so although the Nazis did not propose to deny women the right to vote, they claimed that they would bring an end to the disgraceful situation where women were present at, and even participated in, the activities of the Reichstag; the ballot-box had, they claimed, sullied German womanhood¹. The "liberal-democratic-Marxists" and "Jewish-intellectuals" who had brought this about had tried, said the Nazis, to disguise the differences between the sexes, and the result had been the aping of men by some women in a ridiculous caricature, in terms of character, aspirations and outward appearance².

1. Hitler expressed his views on the subject frequently, e.g., "I detest women who dabble in politics.... In 1924 we had a sudden upsurge of women who were attracted by politics.... They wanted to join the Reichstag, in order to raise the moral level of that body, so they said. I told them that 90% of the matters dealt with by parliament were masculine affairs, on which they could not have opinions of any value.... A man who shouts is not a handsome sight. But if it's a woman it's terribly shocking.... In short, gallantry forbids one to give women an opportunity of putting themselves in situations that do not suit them". Hitler's Table-Talk, London, 1953, pp. 251-52, 26 January, 1942 (Evening).

BA, R45II/64, DVP Reichsgeschäftsstelle, Frauenrundschau, 4 March, 1932, "Nationalsozialisten und Frau", p. 1141.

2. Hitler's speech to the Nazi women's organisation at the 1934 Party rally, Max Domarus, Hitler: Reden und Proklamationen, Würzburg, 1962, p. 451.

Rudolf Hess, "Die Aufgaben der deutschen Frau", VB, 27 May, 1936.

G. Vogel, Die Deutsche Frau: Im Weltkrieg und im Dritten Reich, Breslau, 1936, vol. III, p. 5.

There were indeed grounds for these accusations, however masked they might seem to be by the Nazis' vicious hysteria. It was not only in the most noticeable aspects, such as the wearing of trousers, the copying of men's hair-styles, the ostentatious smoking of cigarettes in public, that women had tried to imitate men, and thus prove their equality with them. The founding of the Open Door International for the Economic Emancipation of the Woman Worker in 1929 had led to the raising of demands in Germany that measures of labour protection - measures actually favourable to women in terms of their physical health - be revoked, since they prevented women from enjoying complete equality on the labour market¹. The Communists could perhaps be accused of wanting the best of both worlds, but their demands for equal pay for equal work and, in addition, increased maternity benefit and labour protection for women, were more sensible than the Open Door's indiscriminate demands for equality at any price².

The Open Door and its supporters were, however, in a tiny minority, and by characterising Weimar democrats as sharing their views the Nazis deliberately misrepresented the political and social climate of the Republic, for their own ends. The large body of conservative opinion, a majority of which was female, in the influential Roman Catholic Centre Party and in the German Nationalist camp, opposed the excesses of radical feminists, the more consistent but still extreme views of the Communists, and even the cautious and at times half-hearted egalitarianism of the Social Democrats, while

1. Report in JADG, 1930, pp. 191-92. See also Chapter 3, pp. 119-20.

2. BA, R2/18554, proposal for a Bill put to the Reichstag by KPD members, 16 October, 1931.

liberals in the People's Party and even in the Democratic Party were coming to the conclusion by the late 1920s that in some cases freedom had been abused. Together the Nationalists, the Centre and the People's Party, with some support from the Democratic Party, planned to introduce a Bill to permit censorship as part of their campaign against "filth in the theatre and in literature"¹. The Churches were active in the front line of those fighting to uphold traditional moral values as they saw them², and the moderate feminists were concerned only to consolidate the modest gains they had made since the turn of the century, not to promote an egalitarian revolution. Gertrud Bäumer, leader of this group of middle-class feminists, found it completely natural that even her most gifted pupils should want more than anything to marry and have a family, which would absorb all their interest and energy³. In domestic affairs, then, apart from minority fringe groups of extremists, the word most applicable to the political and social atmosphere in the Weimar Republic is possibly "moderate", but much of the time more probably "conservative".

The governments of the Republic were bound to look conservative, with the Centre Party unique in participating in every one from 1919-32. The coalition nature of these governments tended to mean stalemate,

1. BA, Kl.Erw., no. 267-(1), letter from R. Glöckler of the DDP Ortsgruppe Hildesheim to Gertrud Bäumer, 23 December, 1928.
2. "Soziale Kundgebung des Deutschen Evangelischen Kirchentages, 14. bis 17.6.1924" and "Aufruf des Deutschen Evangelischen Kirchenausschuss vom 25. Mai 1932", AfB, 1932, no. 2, pp. 88 and 95-96.

Flann Campbell, "Birth Control and the Christian Churches", Population Studies, 1960, pp. 136-38.
3. BA, op. cit., no. 258-(1), letter from Gertrud Bäumer to Marianne Weber, 12 September, 1931.

particularly when the Social Democrats joined the Centre in government in the years 1919-23 and 1928-30. The Centre was pathologically terrified of any change which would undermine the position of the Roman Catholic Church or promote Bolshevism, and it therefore endeavoured to block any measure proposed by the nominally Marxist SPD, in spite of the latter's conservatism as demonstrated in the events of 1918-19. There was minimal room for manoeuvre in a situation where the secession of one of these parties from government would precipitate the government's fall, and necessitate once again a casting about for a viable partnership among the parties, or else a new general election. The disastrous outcome of Brüning's resort to the latter method in September 1930, when the Nazis increased their parliamentary representation from twelve to 107, might seem to justify the reluctance of earlier coalitions to use it, and their preference for compromise instead.

But compromise meant the abdicating of legislative initiative in any issue that was mildly contentious; the result was that the clauses of the Weimar Constitution which declared the equality of women in the family and in the opportunities available in education and the professions were not transformed into law. The agitation of the radical feminists throughout the Weimar years, and to some extent the increased activity of the Communist Party in the late 1920s and early 1930s, was the response to governmental inaction on this front. But it was not only political differences and political convenience that conditioned this situation. The chief preoccupation in Germany for most of the Weimar period was the financial and economic position of the country after the disasters of the Great War and the inflation of the early 1920s; there was only a brief period of apparent recovery

before renewed disaster in 1929-30 again demanded the full attention of the government, and relegated serious discussion of equal rights for women to the realm of theory. Indeed, the economic crisis created a situation where not only was progress towards equality for women halted, but where voices were increasingly raised which demanded that men be given preference in job opportunities of every kind, with jobs in very short supply. The call for a restriction of women to their "natural" occupations, in the home and with children was raised by many who were not Nazis, and became increasingly popular as the depression grew only deeper. Thus, the Nazis were able to win support not in spite of their view of women's role - which would no doubt have been far less popular in time of economic stability - but actually because of it. The groundwork for measures they would introduce to reverse the progress made in opening up opportunities for women was laid before they came to power.

to court in most aspects of family life. The husband, for example, had the right to choose the place of residence, the name and religion of the children of the marriage, and the character and duration of their education. The wife was "entitled and obliged

For a detailed and fully-documented account of some aspects of the racialist movement under the Nazis, including the campaign for marriage reform, see the appendix to *The Nazi Movement* by Michael J. Evans, "The Nazi Movement in Germany, 1919-1933", 1933, 1-10.

See also *Kaiserliche Gesetze*, 1919, in *Germany and the World*, New York, 1933.

In 1900, e.g., in a female population of 13.4 million 16.4 million were single; but almost 14 million of these were under 15, and a further 1.6 million between 15 and 18. Thus only 1 million were over 18 were single, compared with 2.7 million who were married and the 2.4 million who had been married, and who were now widowed or divorced. *Statistik*, 1909, p. 4.

General IntroductionA. The Background

The granting of the national franchise to all German women over twenty in November 1918 was the symbol of the emancipation for which the feminist movement in its various branches had fought since the founding of the Allgemeiner Deutscher Frauenverein (General German Women's Association) by Luise Otto in 1865¹. In some respects it was merely a symbol: the Imperial Civil Code, which had come into effect as recently as 1900, and which remained in force regardless of the change in 1918 from Empire to Republic, was permeated by a paternalistic assumption of woman's dependence on man which had ceased to be valid before the Great War. Indeed single women were put on an equal footing with men as far as written law went; but the vast majority of women would marry at some time² and thus accept the authority a husband might choose to exert in most aspects of family life. The husband, for example, had the right to choose the place of residence, the names and religion of the children of the marriage, and the character and duration of their education. The wife was "entitled and obliged

1. For a detailed and fully-documented account of some aspects of the feminist movement under the Empire, including the campaign for suffrage reform, see the unpublished D. Phil. thesis by Richard J. Evans, "The Women's Movement in Germany, 1890-1919", Oxford, 1972.

See also Katharine Anthony, Feminism in Germany and Scandinavia, New York, 1915.

2. In 1900, e.g., in a female population of 28.6 million 16.4 million were single; but almost 10 million of these were under 15, and a further 1.6 million between 15 and 18; thus only 5 million women over 18 were single, compared with the 9.7 million who were married and the 2.4 million who had been married; and no doubt many of the younger single girls, at least, would still marry. Figures from St.J., 1909, p. 4.

to conduct the family household", and she was also obliged to work in her husband's business, insofar as this was customary in their social position. The husband was entitled to prevent his wife from working for another person if it was clear that her employment was "prejudicial to the interests of the marriage"; he also had direct control of any money his wife might have or acquire, as a dowry or legacy, for example.

There was one clause in the Civil Code which was of novel significance for the married woman: this was the provision that she might dispose freely of any money which she earned by her own effort from gainful employment outside the home¹. The 1907 census showed that there were 8,243,498 women in full-time employment, constituting almost 34% of all employed Germans - of whom 2.8 million were married. If 1.8 million of these probably did not, as "assisting family members"² receive a formal wage, there nevertheless remained a million married women who were in a position to benefit from the independent earnings' clause of the Civil Code, and the enhanced status in marriage which it implied. While this provision was realistic, the Civil Code did on the whole treat women in a backward-looking way; but, as a British commentator observed, to adopt a more modern approach to the status of women would have raised irreconcilable opposition, and doubtless been an obstacle to the acceptance of the Code as a whole³.

1. M. Greiff (ed.), Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch, Berlin and Leipzig, 1930, pp. 747-63.

2. Figures from St.J., 1914, pp. 14 and 16.

3. E. Schuster, "The German Civil Code (1)", Law Quarterly Review, 1896, p. 32.

If some of the new legal provisions did seem patriarchal in both tone and substance, they nevertheless lacked the complete subjugation implied in the codes of some other countries, including the two at the political extremes of pre-1914 Europe. In Republican France, the clause "le mari conserve toujours sa prérogative de 'puissance maritale' avec son droit a 'l'obéissance'" remained in force until as late as 1938¹. In Tsarist Russia, section 107 of the Imperial Code was even more dogmatic: a wife's duty was "to obey her husband as the head of the family, to be loving and respectful, to be submissive in every respect, and show him every compliance and affection, he being the master of the house"². This conception of marriage is highly reminiscent of the Pauline view, expressed in Ephesians V: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is head of the Church...." St. Paul's teachings certainly influenced and informed the attitude of the Christian Churches towards marriage, after as well as before the Great War.

Although women's legal position within marriage left much to be desired, the feminists had nevertheless made some gains in the years before the Great War, most notably in the field of education. By 1914, women were admitted to full matriculation in the universities of every state of the Empire. The corollary of this, the provision of facilities for academic secondary schooling - as an alternative to

1. Robert H. Lowie, Towards Understanding Germany, Chicago, 1954, p. 208.

2. Rudolf Schlesinger, The Family in the USSR, London, 1949, p. 281.

the genteel, anti-intellectual Höhere Töchterschule - had also been realised. These achievements were largely the result of a sustained campaign begun by the middle-class women's movement in the 1860s and brought to success around the turn of the century under the leadership of Helene Lange¹. Education was the feminists' first point of attack on a male-dominated society because they realised that adequate educational opportunities were essential if women were ever to challenge men in the more specialised categories of employment, whether skilled manual, clerical or professional. In addition, it was clear that the under-education of women was a continual, if spurious, justification for their relegation to political inactivity and gentle submission in the home.

The feminists' campaign here was directed only at those areas of education where women were at a noticeable disadvantage, senior schooling and higher education; the numbers involved were therefore extremely small, since for every girl who attended a senior school of any kind in 1911 there were twenty-five girls at elementary school, and, further, only 9% of all senior school pupils attended the new Lyzeen or Studienanstalten, which alone provided an avenue to higher education². But the pioneering work in the interests of a tiny minority was to prove of inestimable value to the somewhat larger numbers of girls who would enjoy the chance to exploit their academic abilities to the full in future decades, particularly once a wide range of professional

1. A good, brief account of these developments is to be found in Friedrich Paulsen, Geschichte des Gelehrten Unterrichts, Berlin and Leipzig, 1921, vol. 2, pp. 776-81.

2. Figures from St.J., 1914, pp. 322-25.

opportunities - restricted to teaching, medicine and social work before 1918 - was accessible to women.

It was the Great War that gave women the chance to obtain positions which had previously been exclusively male preserves. This was particularly the case in industry, where women were increasingly brought into skilled and responsible positions as men were called up for active service. Women were not included in the Hindenburg Programme of 1916, which provided for the conscription into industry of all civilian men, but they were strongly encouraged to volunteer for work and responded in large numbers¹. Their reward was a moderate narrowing of wage differentials, so that by the end of the war they were, on average, being paid about half of men's wage rates². Middle-class women, too, contributed to the war effort; Gertrud Bäumer, leader of the Bund deutscher Frauenvereine (League of German Women's Associations), founded the Nationale Frauendienst (National Women's Service) in 1914³ to mobilise volunteers for welfare work and for the making of clothing for the armed forces. Large numbers of middle-class women also volunteered for the Red Cross⁴.

While working-class and middle-class women were serving their country in a practical way, the path to higher education was open to

1. Charlotte Lorenz, "Die gewerbliche Frauenarbeit während des Krieges", in James T. Shotwell (general ed.), Der Krieg und die Arbeitsverhältnisse, Stuttgart, 1928, pp. 319-20.

2. Gerhard Bry, Wages in Germany, 1871-1945, New York, 1960, p. 205.

3. BDC, Gertrud Bäumer's file, "Lebenslauf", undated (?1936).

4. Lorenz, op. cit., p. 319.

Evans, op. cit., pp. 297-98, 324.

those middle-class girls who had been the first to benefit from the reforms in senior schooling immediately before the war. With potential male students at the front, girls were admitted to German universities in increasing numbers; whereas their immediately pre-war share in the student body had been 5% or 6%, by 1916 it had risen to 9.5%, a level that would be maintained until it rose again after 1923¹. All these developments suggested that when the war ended women would be in a strong position to demand greater opportunities, even equality of opportunity, in employment of all kinds, including freer access to the professions; in addition, it was becoming increasingly less defensible to deny women a voice, through the suffrage, in the affairs of the nation.

B. Women's Rights in a Political Context

The end of the Imperial regime, coming at the same time as the armistice in 1918, meant the removal of one of the major obstacles to women's advancement generally and to their enfranchisement in particular, the Kaiser. The caretaker Socialist Government was quick to extend the suffrage to women, and the election of forty-one women deputies as almost ten per cent of the membership of the National Assembly in January 1919 seemed to bode well for rapid progress towards equality of opportunity between the sexes². It was thus in a mood of optimism that Marie Juchacz of the SPD made the

1. Figures from St.J.: 1923, p. 318; 1924-25, p. 357; 1928, p. 509.

2. Hugh W. Puckett, Germany's Women Go Forward, New York, 1930, p. 252.

first speech to be delivered by a woman in a national representative capacity, in the National Assembly at Weimar on 11 February, 1919:

"I should like to say now that the 'woman question' in Germany no longer exists in the old sense of the term; it has been solved. It will no longer be necessary for us to campaign for our rights with meetings, resolutions and petitions. Political conflict, which will always exist, will from now on take place in another form. We women now have the opportunity to allow our influence to be exerted within the context of party groupings on the basis of ideology"¹.

It needed only a decade to show that the claims made by Marie Juchacz had been premature, and the hope implicit in them illusory. By 1930 the radical feminists were convinced that progress towards equality for women had been frustrated throughout the 1920s because of the continuing majority of men in every parliamentary party. In fact, women's representation in the Reichstag actually dropped in the mid-1920s, to a share of around six per cent², although after the election of November 1932 it again reached a figure of nine per cent, when there were thirty-five women deputies³. The enfranchisement of women had meant only, said the radicals, that they were now represented; they remained powerless⁴. More moderate feminists echoed this view: for Katharina von Kardorff, one-time People's Party deputy in the Reichstag, the chief obstacle to progress was precisely the arrangement which Marie Juchacz had

1. "Aus der Rede vom Marie Juchacz als erste deutsche weibliche Abgeordnete, 11.2.1919", Vorwärts, 14 November, 1968.

2. Puckett, loc. cit.

3. Report in BF, January, 1933, p. 5.

4. Lida Gustava Heymann: "Deutsches Debacle", FiS, November 1930, p. 2, and "Frauenbefreiung", FiS, September/October 1932, p. 5.

welcomed, namely the dispersal of the women representatives into a large number of political parties, with partisan allegiance given priority over the solidarity of the female sex. If women were ever to make progress towards equality they would, she claimed, have to act together as a combined non-party pressure group, although she and her associates did have reservations about the creation of a Women's Party as such¹.

In fact, given the sharp differences of opinion both between and among socialist and middle-class women, the formation of a Women's Party by women of all shades of political opinion was not a practical proposition at any time during the Weimar years. A degree of co-operation was achieved briefly, in 1930, when women Reichstag deputies from all political parties - except the Economics Party and the NSDAP, neither of which had women representatives - came together in a study group to discuss matters of particular interest to women. But this arrangement lapsed after July 1932, as increasing political bitterness made collaboration impossible².

The basic reason for the disappointment of the high hopes entertained by feminists immediately after the war was neatly pin-pointed by Katharina von Kardorff: "Our equality with men," she observed, "is written into the Constitution but not into the Civil Code"³. Indeed Article 109 of the Weimar Constitution stated that "All Germans are equal before the law. Men and women have fundamentally the same civil rights and obligations". Then, Article 119 acknowledged

1. BA, Nachlass Katharina von Kardorff, no. 38, 1927-32, "Brauchen wir eine Frauenpartei?", 22 January, 1930, pp. 44-65.

Ibid., no. 27, letter from Emma Ender to Katharina von Kardorff, 5 January, 1931, p. 75.

2. Report in BF, October 1932, p. 6.

3. BA, Nachlass Katharina von Kardorff, no. 38, loc. cit.

that the Civil Code's view of the marriage relationship was out of date: "Marriage is based on the equality of the sexes". And Article 128 affirmed the right of women to equality of opportunity in public life and the public service with the words: "All citizens without distinction are eligible for public office in accordance with the laws and according to their abilities and achievements. All discriminations against women in the civil service are abolished". But these statements were not of themselves sufficient to transform the position of women in Germany: legislation alone could alter existing laws and, particularly, the Civil Code, and until it was forthcoming they remained in force as before.

The continuing majority of men in all parties should not of itself have prevented the enactment of measures to promote equality for women, since several of the post-war political parties were pledged to support the implementation of the Constitution, including the clauses which would reform the Civil Code where it discriminated against women and which would provide equality of opportunity for women in employment and public life. Of the middle-class parties the Democratic Party (DDP) was the most unequivocally in favour of equality for women; indeed, the outstanding figure in the pre-war middle-class women's movement, Helene Lange, was one of the founders of the DDP¹, and other prominent feminists, including Gertrud Bäumer and Marie-Elisabeth Lüders, joined it in 1918. Esteem for Helene Lange was such that she was created Honorary President of the DDP².

1. HA, reel 37, fol. 736, Mitteilungen des Reichsfrauenausschusses der DDP, 20 May, 1930, "Helene Lange".

2. BA, R45III/14, Protokoll über die Sitzung des Parteiausschusses der DDP, 25 May, 1930, p. 44.

The People's Party (DVP) was almost as committed to the achievement of women's rights: its 1919 programme stated, in a paragraph entitled "The Woman Question", that the party was in favour of the "political, economic and legal equality of the sexes...and...the admission of women to all offices and positions on condition of having the requisite preparatory training...."¹.

During the 1920s both these parties developed a network of local groups of women party workers, co-ordinated in each case by a National Women's Committee which published a newsletter to circulate information about the party activity of women at the local level and to feature items of particular interest to women². The aims of the DDP's National Women's Committee were to defend and propagate the idea of democracy, to promote the DDP, to educate German women to civic responsibility, and to achieve equality for women³. Doubtless in recognition of the active part played by women in the party, and in the hope of attracting more female support, the party - now the "Staatspartei" - held discussions in summer 1932 about the possibility of giving second place on the national list of candidates for the next general election to a woman⁴, a practice adopted in some state elections⁵; but nothing came

1. BA, R45II/62, "Grundsätze der DVP 1919" (1931 reprint), Sammlungen ...verschiedener Parteien, pp. 150-51.

2. HA, op. cit., 20 April, 1930.

BA, R45II/64, DVP Reichsgeschäftsstelle, Frauenrundscha, 4 March, 1932, p. 1141.

3. HA, op. cit., 20 January, 1930.

4. BA, R45III/51, Protokoll über die Sitzung des Parteiausschusses der DDP, 7 July, 1932, p. 109.

5. BA, Kl.Erw., no. 267, letter from Gertrud Bäumer to Emmy Beckmann, undated (?1929).

of them¹. The DVP, however, did put their long-serving deputy Dr. Elsa Matz forward as the third candidate on their list for the election in March 1933². Dr. Matz was President of the DVP's Women's Committee and a member of the executive committee of the party³. The DVP's Women's Review paid tribute to the loyalty of the party's women members in March 1932, describing their "tireless" activity in supporting the party throughout the country⁴. But by this time both the liberal parties were becoming very weak indeed, to the extent that Lida Gustava Heymann, referring to the DDP even in November 1930 had asked, in a parenthesis, "Does it still exist?"⁵.

The mass of women continued to be strongly influenced by the more conservative power groups, the Roman Catholic and Lutheran Churches and, to some extent, the Nationalist Party (DNVP). The latter had admitted women to political activity before the war more out of self-defence against the socialists and the liberals, who had gladly enlisted women's aid, than out of conviction; in fact, the DNVP's chief women's organisation, the Deutscher Frauenbund 1909, was specifically opposed to feminists of any political colour⁶. Nevertheless, the DNVP had its own National Women's Committee, which in 1933

1. Reply by the DDP to a questionnaire sent to each party by the BDF on the eve of the March 1933 election, about the putting forward of women candidates, reported in BF, March 1933, p. 8.
2. Reply by DVP to the BDF's questionnaire, BF, op. cit., p. 9.
3. Elsa Matz's entry in Reichstags-Handbuch, Berlin, 1930, p. 417.
4. BA, R45II/64, loc. cit.
5. Lida Gustava Heymann, "Deutsches Debacle", FiS, November 1930, p. 2.
6. Walter Kaufmann, Monarchism in the Weimar Republic, New York, 1953, p. 130.

claimed that it was obvious that the party was in favour of "protecting equal rights for women"¹. After all, the DNVP had consistently presented women candidates at general elections throughout the Weimar period, the most distinguished of whom was Paula Müller-Ottfried, President of the Evangelical Women's Association, who was a Reichstag deputy throughout the 1920s².

It was abundantly clear, however, that the DNVP and the Evangelical Church, whose political views were very similar, aimed to mobilise women for the purpose of forming an opposition to progressive ideas which included pacifism, increased employment opportunities for women at all levels, and any kind of "permissiveness" in social behaviour or sexual morality³. Certainly, it did seem that women preferred order to disorder; there was a higher proportion of women's votes among those for Hindenburg in the Presidential election of March 1932 than among those for any other candidate, and women were in a minority of voters for the extremist candidates, both Communist and Nazi⁴. The raison d'être of Evangelical women seemed to be to uphold the idea that women's role was, and should be, that of housewife and mother; the Evangelical Women's Association

1. Reply by DNVP to the BDF's questionnaire, BF, loc. cit.

2. Cuno Horkenbach (ed.), Das Deutsche Reich von 1918 bis heute, Berlin, 1930, p. 718.

3. "Soziale Kundgebung des Deutschen Evangelischen Kirchentages, 14. bis 17.6.1924" and "Aufruf des Deutschen Evangelischen Kirchenausschuss vom 25. Mai 1932", documents reproduced in AfB, 1932, no. 2, pp. 88 and 95-96.

4. BA, R45II/64, DVP Reichsgeschäftsstelle, Frauenrundschau, 6 April, 1932, "Zur Hindenburgwahl am 10. April", p. 1167.

made its position clear in January 1932 with the pronouncement that "German Evangelical women see in the child the God-given natural perfection of marriage". In their view, only medical reasons could justify refusal by a married couple to have children¹.

The views of the Roman Catholic Church were certainly as uncompromising as those of the Evangelical Church; but, even so, the Catholic Church realised that to give no ground at all on the "woman question" would be only to its own disadvantage. Therefore the political wing of the Church, the Centre Party, reluctantly made some concessions to the feminists in its 1918 programme "Centre Party and the New Political Order". For the first time a Centre Party manifesto supported women's suffrage and made mention of "the contribution of women in political life". While regretting that circumstances necessitated the sanctioning of women's admission to the "brawling and quarrelling" of politics, the Centre Party put a good face on it by asserting that

"we are convinced that we shall find in our women enthusiastic fellow-combatants and energetic helpers.... The counsel of experienced women will be indispensable to us in creating a new state structure...."².

But the continuing reactionary attitude of the Roman Catholic Church was epitomised in the Papal Encyclical "Quadragesimo Anno" of 1931, which demanded an end to the employment of married women³, and which

1. Ibid., Frauenrundschau, 28 January, 1932, "Deutsch-Evangelische Frauen für die Erhaltung von Ehe und Familie", p. 1111.
2. BA, R45II/62, "Zentrum und politische Neordnung: Ein Programme", Sammlungen...verschiedener Parteien, p. 39.
3. Quoted in Leo Zadow, "Die Doppelbelastung der Frau in Familie und Erwerbsberuf", Stimmen der Zeit, 1962-63, p. 376.

aroused the ire even of women who could in no way be termed radical or socialist¹. On the other hand, a representative of the Centre claimed to have found considerable support, particularly among women, for the party's view that women could not fulfil the demands of two full-time jobs - one of these being that of housewife and mother - satisfactorily; he also maintained that the man "is, and remains, the provider for and head of the family"². This, then, was the attitude towards the position of women in society of the one political party which was in every German government from 1919 to 1932.

The ascendancy of the Centre was to some extent facilitated by the splitting of the SPD during the war, a circumstance which was particularly serious for the working women's movement³. Most of the leading women socialists of the pre-war period, notably Rosa Luxemburg and Clara Zetkin, belonged to the radical wing of the party, and therefore found themselves in opposition to the SPD's war-time policies, finally becoming leading members of the German Communist Party (KPD) on its founding at the end of 1918. These women had always disliked the at times latent, at times overt, antifeminism of the rank and file of the SPD⁴. In the KPD, the radicals were determined to return to

1. BA, Nachlass Katharina von Kardorff, no. 34a, "Papst contra Frau?", 1931, pp. 79-93.

2. BA, R2/1291, letter from W. Rompel to Gärtner at the Reich Ministry of Finance, 10 April, 1929.

3. This "working women's movement" was not so much a women's movement as a part of the socialist movement. There were women's groups within the SPD and the KPD, but these were composed of women who were full members of the respective party. See Alice Rühle-Gerstel, Das Frauenproblem der Gegenwart. Eine Psychologische Bilanz, Leipzig, 1932, pp. 142-43, and BA, R58/1146, RMdI/NsdL, "Kommunistische Frauenbewegung", 5 March, 1932.

4. Werner Thönnessen, Frauenemanzipation, Frankfurt, 1969, pp. 84-98.

basic Marxist ideals, and so the liberation of women from all kinds of discrimination would follow naturally from the liberation of the working class from capitalism, since it was the capitalist system, with its bourgeois morality, which had brought about the subordination of women in society and in the economy¹.

If the SPD had become bureaucratised before 1914, the process was only intensified by the secession of the radicals and its new-found respectability as a party of government. Docile moderates like Marie Juchacz and Gertrud Hanna became the chief spokeswomen of the party; these loyally upheld official party policy, and were at pains to remind women members that they were first and foremost members of the SPD, and that their women's organisation was only one constituent of "this great party"². Gertrud Hanna firmly believed that, in the socialist trade union movement, at any rate, positive harm would result from any attempt to isolate women in their own groups, and found herself having to remind male trade unionists at times that the interests of their movement would be better served by keeping women in it as full members, alongside the men³. More than one delegate to the SPD's 1927 congress voiced the opinion that not nearly enough was being done by the party to interest women in all aspects of daily life and to mobilise their support for SPD policies generally, not just those of particular relevance to women; the middle-class women's

1. G. G. L. Alexander, Kämpfende Frauen, n.p., 1924, pp. 3-4.

2. Marie Juchacz's speech to the Women's Conference at the 1927 SPD Party Congress at Kiel, 27-29 May, 1927, found in the published proceedings of the Congress, Berlin, 1927, p. 302.

3. "Frauenarbeit und Gewerkschaften", Gewerkschaftszeitung, 11 January, 1930, p. 22.

movement and the liberal parties were felt to be much more active and successful in this¹.

But although the SPD was nominally committed to the pursuit of equality between the sexes, it had been a party to the Demobilisation Orders of the post-war years which had the effect of dismissing women from jobs to make way for men returning from the forces². In addition the onset of the Depression in 1929-30 gave rise again to hostility among working men and within the socialist unions towards what they regarded as female competition for the ever-decreasing number of jobs³. The SPD could boast the highest percentage of women deputies in their parliamentary party, as compared with the other parties; but women never held positions of the first importance in the party⁴. During the Weimar period the SPD was incapable of shaking off prejudices which had a long tradition, while at the same time exhibiting complacency about the things they had achieved.

On the other side of the socialist camp there was no equivocation whatsoever. The break-away KPD trade union organisation, the Revolutionary Trade Union Opposition (RGO), founded in 1929⁵, was fully explicit about its policy, which included the abolition of wage

1. Report of the SPD's 1927 Party Congress, pp. 303-04, 308.

2. Thönnessen, op. cit., pp. 100-02.

3. Ibid., pp. 105, 118-19.

4. Richard N. Hunt, German Social Democracy, 1918-33, New Haven, 1964, p. 81.

5. Hermann Weber (ed.), Völker hört die Signale, Munich, 1967, pp. 22-23, 126.

differentials between men and women, within the context of a campaign for a general rise in wages, as well as more thorough protection for women workers and longer paid leave for expectant and nursing mothers. The RGO also campaigned for equal salaries for men and women white-collar workers, and for the repeal of provisions, reintroduced in 1932, permitting the dismissal of married women civil servants. In a clear reference to the contentious question about whether a woman should be dismissed from public employment if she had an illegitimate child, the RGO's manifesto asserted its opposition to "any interference in the personal life of women civil servants"¹.

The end of the 1920s saw the intensification of KPD activity in Germany, with the directive from Stalin that Social Democracy, above all, must be combated. Intensive propaganda campaigns were launched with the aim of encouraging women, especially, to join the proletarian struggle for a "Soviet Germany"². The belief that capitalism in Germany was reaching its crisis with the Depression led to particularly energetic recruiting drives in 1931 and 1932. These did bear fruit, but, given that the situation was particularly favourable to Communist agitation - with compulsory wage cuts and the shortage of jobs - the results were disappointing, especially among women in the heavy industrial areas. Local women shop stewards were felt by the executive to have neglected opportunities, and so greater

1. BA, R45/vorl. 10, RGO Referenten Materialien, October 1932, "Die Arbeiterinnen in die Einheitsfrontaktion", pp. 12-13.

2. BA, R58/1145, 6 February, RMdI/NsdL, 6 February, 1931, "Kommunistische Frauenbewegung".

central control was proposed and new targets for women's recruitment were set in March 1932¹.

C. The Middle-class Women's Movement in the Weimar Republic

In addition to the split in the socialist camp, the middle-class women's movement, in which there had already been sharp differences of opinion before the war², was now divided into two groups whose attitudes had diverged considerably. Those who had been in the leadership of the Bund deutscher Frauenvereine (BDF)³ before the war, and who had organised the Nationale Frauendienst during it - the group led by Gertrud Bäumer - largely associated themselves with the DDP in local and national politics, but also continued to be active in their separate women's organisations within the BDF. The other, smaller group was more radical, not affiliated to any political party but wholeheartedly republican; it was strongly feminist, pacifist, and thoroughly disenchanted with the "establishment" of the women's movement which, felt the radicals, had been tamed and institutionalised by its nationalist stance in the war, and bought off by a few concessions to the feminist lobby after it.

The final split had come in 1915 when a small group of middle-class feminists, led by Lida Gustava Heymann and Anita Augspurg, had condemned the BDF for volunteering to assist the war effort, and had

1. BA, R58/1146, RmAI/NsdL, 5 March, 1932, pp. 5-13.

2. Evans, op. cit., discusses these differences in detail, as a consistent theme of his work.

3. The BDF was a nationwide co-ordinating association of middle-class women's organisations of a charitable, vocational, professional and social nature.

preferred to join with women pacifists from other countries in founding the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom at The Hague. The WILPF pledged itself to work for peace and disarmament and to lobby governments in all countries to try to achieve this¹. As the organisation developed, in time of peace, its demands became more far-reaching with as decisive an application to domestic as to international affairs. In the election campaign of 1930 the German branch of the WILPF urged its ~~candidates~~ ^{members} to canvass and vote for candidates from any party which supported its twelve demands, which included the abolition of the death penalty, the implementing of the Constitution's provisions which promoted equality for women and for the illegitimate child, the repeal of the severe abortion law, paragraph 218 of the Criminal Code, and a ban on the production of and trade in weapons². Campaigning for total disarmament, the WILPF preached the pointlessness of trying to create protective devices against the use of poison gas and air attacks on the civilian population; the only solution, as they saw it, was to outlaw such threats by international co-operation, which would bring to an end the irresponsible expenditure of vast sums of money on armaments which was criminal in time of economic depression³.

Perhaps surprisingly, given their militant feminism, the radicals, like the more moderate feminists, were opposed to the creation of a Women's Party. They proposed rather that at elections

1. Rühle-Gerstel, op. cit., pp. 137-38.
2. "Zur Reichstagswahl", FiS, September/October 1930, p. 1.
3. Report in FiS, April 1929, p. 8. The 1929 editions of Die Frau im Staat devoted a high proportion of their space to articles and reports on matters connected with war, peace, and poison gas.

there should be a "women's list" composed of women from the various political parties in proportion to the parliamentary representation of the parties. This would, they claimed, have the result of giving women a larger representation and greater influence in the legislature than they had during the 1920s; but the radicals also felt that experience had shown that Germany's women were not yet sufficiently politically mature for their scheme¹.

The German branch of the WILPF cast its net wide in trying to attract support for its views. Although most of its leadership regarded the Churches as bastions of reaction, it nevertheless realised that their influence was still considerable, and therefore tried to win their support for the disarmament campaign. The WILPF contacted Adam Stegerwald, a leading member of the Centre Party, and its representatives even obtained an audience with the Papal Nuncio, Pacelli; they then used their tenuous connection with these names to try to win over the Christian Trade Union organisation². The German branch was also extremely active on the international scene, playing host to a full meeting of the League in Frankfurt in January 1929³. Three years later, another conference, of all international women's pacifist organisations, was held in Munich, under the chairmanship of the local WILPF leader, Constanze Hallgarten⁴. This meeting was

1. "Frauenpartei? Nein, Frauenlisten", FiS, April 1931, p. 9.
2. IfZ, MA 422, frame 5797, letter from Karl Genzler to Otte, General Secretary of the Association of Christian Trade Unions, 19 November, 1928.
3. Ibid., frame 5794, "Die modernen Kriegsmethoden und der Schutz der Zivilbevölkerung", proposals for the Frankfurt International Conference of the WILPF, 4-6 January, 1929.
4. "München: Kämpferin gegen den Krieg", Süddeutsche Zeitung 15 September, 1966.

reported by the Nazis under the title "Pacifist scandal in Munich"¹.

Besides disarmament, the other major issue which absorbed the energies of the radicals of the WILPF was the position of women in post-war Germany. The magazine of this group, Die Frau im Staat, founded in 1918 by Lida Gustava Heymann and Anita Augspurg, and edited by them², devoted considerable space in every issue in the late 1920s and early 1930s to pointing out how little progress had really been made in winning equality of opportunity and equality of rights for women. It was here that they really felt themselves to be out of sympathy with the liberal women of the BDF, who, not unjustifiably, were proud of the achievements they had made in the pre-war period, particularly in the field of education. The liberals were well aware that far less progress had been made during the 1920s than had been anticipated by both themselves and the radicals, in the euphoria of 1918-19 with the granting of the suffrage and the writing into the Constitution of many of their demands³. But although the liberals realised that much had been left undone - especially with the Civil Code unamended - they nevertheless gave the impression, to the radicals and to the young, who had not actually been involved in the struggles of the Imperial period, that they were complacent, always harking back to the things that they had achieved and to their contribution to the war effort.

1. IfZ, MA 135, frames 136366-67, NS-Korrespondenz 2, 15 January, 1932, "Pazifisten-skandal in München".

2. Lida Gustava Heymann's entry in Wer ist's? 1928, p. 656.

3. Looking back over the 1920s, Dorothee von Velsen referred, in a letter to Gertrud Bäumer, to "the disappointment at having achieved nothing". BA, Kl.Erw., no. 296-(1), letter of 8 March, 1934, p. 31.

At first sight the ground between the liberal and the radical groups in the middle-class feminist camp was not so very great. Both groups favoured improved opportunities for women at all levels and in all areas - economic, political, social, legal, cultural - and both were outspoken in their attacks on a male-dominated society. In addition, the liberals came out strongly in favour of close international co-operation after the Peace Treaties had been signed. In a way, however, their motive was different from that of the radicals, who consistently and unconditionally supported disarmament and internationalism; the liberals worked rather from the premise that if Germany were disarmed compulsorily then they would campaign tirelessly to achieve general disarmament¹. But the liberals did genuinely believe that peace must be preserved, and that the international activity of women, whether generally in League of Nations' affiliates or particularly with women from other countries, was not merely desirable but actually essential.

Gertrud Bäumer, for one, was the German delegate to the League of Nations' committee on youth affairs, as well as being a representative at international disarmament discussions²; it was, after all, largely for her "outspokenly pacifist and feminist outlook" that she was not only dismissed from the public service by the Nazis in 1933, but even, from 1935 to 1937, denied the right to publish her writings³.

1. See, e.g., report in BF, 15 January, 1932, p. 1: "Das ohnmächtige, waffenlose Deutschland...hat naturgemäss das allergrösste Interesse daran, dass das Ziel der Abrüstungskonferenz erreicht wird".
2. Gertrud Bäumer's entry in Das Grosse Brockhaus, 1967, vol. 2, p. 393.
 Emmy Beckmann (ed.), Des Lebens wie der Liebe Band, Tübingen, 1956 (letters of Gertrud Bäumer), letter to Emmy Beckmann, 14 September, 1930, p. 40.
3. BDC, Gertrud Bäumer's file, "Aktenvermerk", 26 October, 1937, p. 3.

Her friend Dorothee von Velsen, also a member of the DDP, and President of the Allgemeiner Deutscher Frauenverein, was a member of the committee of the World Union for Women's Suffrage, and was also in 1932 the Reich Government's representative for social matters and women's affairs in the German delegation to the League of Nations¹. Marie-Elisabeth Lüders, a DDP Reichstag deputy throughout the 1920s, and a prominent member of the BDF and the Deutscher Akademikerinnenbund, was a member of three international committees, including the Society for a European Customs Union, and was, in addition, a leading member of the German Society for the League of Nations². The BDF itself became fully committed to working for universal disarmament, and in 1932 organised a giant petition to gain support for this³.

The liberal women of the BDF were also concerned with questions of youth welfare, employment prospects for girls in time of economic stringency, education of all kinds, and altogether anything which they felt was of interest to women. At their meetings they could call on representatives of the state governments, for example Frau Zeisler from Saxony or Marie Baum from Baden, to report on policy in the different Länder. They could also call on representatives of some Reich ministries to explain the policies and the work of the central government; women in this category included, apart from Gertrud Bäumer at the Ministry of the Interior, Klara Mende in the Ministry of

1. BDC, 8393, Dorothee von Velsen, "Lebenslauf", October 1937.

2. Horkenbach, op. cit., pp. 709-10.

3. Report in BF, 15 January, 1932, p. 1.

Economics and Käthe Gaebel at the central office of the Employment Exchanges¹. These women were themselves living examples of the progress that had been made in winning acceptance for the appointment of women to public office. This meant, however, that these women were necessarily associated with the policies of the governments for which they worked; since it was precisely these governments which were failing to introduce progressive legislation which would benefit women, the women associated with them came in for a share of the criticism heaped on them by the radicals. Naturally, the Reich governments were felt to have been particularly reprehensible since legislation was still wanting, after a decade, to implement the relevant clauses of the Constitution. As in all other matters, however, any Government was rendered ineffectual by its precarious coalition character, the growing succession of short-lived administrations serving only to increase Ministers' reluctance to introduce controversial measures.

The radicals understood this difficulty, and in the Depression years they also appreciated that the Government's room for manoeuvre was negligible. Their argument, however, was that it should have been possible to achieve something more for women during the less troubled years of the 1920s, and that the blame for not agitating continuously to this end lay squarely with the women of the BDF, although they also condemned women in the SPD and the trade unions². In an article entitled "Women's Liberation", published in autumn 1932, Lida Gustava Heymann, in her pungent style, began with the words,

1. "17. Generalversammlung des BDF in Leipzig", BF, 15 October, 1931, pp. 3-4.

2. Lida Gustava Heymann, "Frauen Heraus", FIS, March 1930, pp. 3-5.

"Women's movement! How remote it sounds; it meant something once". But even in the past, she felt, the BDF had been out of touch with reality, just as it assuredly was by 1930:

"Then, as now, the Bund lacked visible vitality; then, as now, the Bund had ossified; then, as now, it was involved in theoretical, soul-destroying discussions; then, as now, it possessed neither a militant spirit nor courage, neither initiative nor real enthusiasm".

Given the real efforts of the BDF leaders in the pre-war period, this indictment was rather unjust; and yet, in relation to the 1920s it was not altogether without foundation. Indeed, Lida Gustava Heymann paid tribute to Luise Otto who, she believed, had had real aims and objectives which had been quietly ignored by the women's leaders from the end of the nineteenth century. For forty years, she claimed, the BDF had concentrated on securing for women a niche in social welfare activity and educating them for a trade or a profession; the undoubted practical value of this could not, she said, obscure the fact that it had only a very indirect bearing on the complete liberation of women, the aim of the radicals¹.

It is clear, then, that the differences between the liberal and the radical feminists were not merely minor ones of substance, but fundamental ones of spirit. The liberals aimed for equality of opportunity for women but accepted that women's physical strength, their biological role and their natural inclinations might mean that they would not in fact achieve positions fully equal with men's. As the radical Alice Rühle-Gerstel commented, in a spirit of criticism,

"The Allgemeiner Deutscher Frauenverein formulated the first point of its programme with a sarcasm obviously directed at the behaviour of many of its fellow women

1. Lida Gustava Heymann, "Frauenbefreiung", FiS, September/October 1932, pp. 5-7.

as follows: 'The Women's Movement proceeds in the framing of its demands from the fact of the fundamental physical and spiritual difference between the sexes'¹.

The radicals, on the other hand, denied that there were any differences so significant as to make complete equality of the sexes in every aspect of life impossible. They took this principle to extremes that seemed to many highly absurd, most notably in the matter of labour protection for women; seeing it as a device to justify paying women at a lower rate than men, they came out against it altogether, joining the Open Door International for the Economic Emancipation of the Woman Worker, whose policy this was². In this, they differed not only from conservatives and from the liberal women's movement, but also from both reformist and revolutionary socialists³.

The radical feminists believed that their campaign was one on behalf of the entire female sex, whereas the liberals were interested only in the affairs of professional, vocational and clerical women workers. The failure of the middle-class and working-class women's representatives to make common cause in the 1890s had led in fact to a division of functions with the middle-class feminists nominally representing the female sex but actually not representing its large

1. Rühle-Gerstel, op. cit., p. 131.

2. Lida Gustava Heymann, "The Open Door Council", FiS, May 1929, p. 1.

3. Thönnessen, op. cit., pp. 165-66.

Report in Jahrbuch des Allgemeinen Deutschen Gewerkschaftsbundes, 1930, p. 192.

BA, R45/vorl. 10, RGO Referenten Materialien, October 1932, "Die Arbeiterinnen in die Einheitsfrontaktion", pp. 12-13.

working-class element, whose interests were the concern of the socialist parties, led as they were by men. The radicals had hoped to cross the class barrier and show working-class women that male chauvinism was as strong in the SPD as in the middle-class parties, and that one did not need to look to the Moscow-dominated KPD to find representatives who wanted equality for all women, not just a privileged minority¹. The charge that the liberal feminists were not interested in the mass of German women but worked only for the benefit of a few selfish "female imitators of men" was also useful ammunition for the Nazis in their attacks on the "women's rightists"². It was certainly true that most of the leading feminists were spinsters, and could therefore be accused of being out of touch with the needs of the vast number of ordinary German wives and mothers. The radicals, at least, showed signs of appreciating some of the pressing problems of human relationships by campaigning for the repeal of the abortion law and the free dissemination of contraceptive advice³, but the reticence preferred by the BDF women on such matters was epitomised by Gertrud Bäumer's remark to a friend that "I really hate the word 'sexual'"⁴.

The differences between the radicals and the liberal feminists were accentuated by an additional complicating factor, the generation

1. Rühle-Gerstel, op. cit., pp. 142-43.
2. Rudolf Hess, quoted in VB, 27 May, 1936.
3. Auguste Kirchhoff, "Siebenter Internationaler Kongress für Geburtenregelung", FiS, November 1930, pp. 5-6.
4. BA, Kl.Erw., 258-(2), letter from Gertrud Bäumer to Marianne Weber, 17 December, 1934.

See also Evans, op. cit., p. 232.

problem. It was clear in the late 1920s and early 1930s that the BDF was not attracting young women, and this was a source of concern to the leadership. Naturally, some of the vitality had gone out of the movement once the aims of the pre-war campaign had been achieved; legal acceptance of women's suffrage, the admission of women to higher education and the professions, demonstrable improvement in senior schooling for girls, and the appointment of a small but significant number of women to prominent positions, meant that the big issues had been settled. The task now was one of comparative drudgery, the ironing out of the minutiae and the unspectacular working out of details to make the intentions expressed in the Constitution a reality. And economic and political circumstances ensured that issues which seemed more nationally pressing took precedence over this work, so that by 1930 there was very little to show for what had been promised.

This gave point to the radicals' charge that the Women's movement as it stood was becoming a meaningless anachronism, and that it could thus not expect to attract the young¹. This was felt to be even more the case since the same old "establishment" still ran the movement as had been running it for twenty years, and that without an infusion of new blood it had become complacent and ossified. But the majority of BDF members seemed in favour of the long-serving committee, since it was returned again and again²; both the reason for and the result of this was undoubtedly that potential young adherents

1. Lida Gustava Heymann, "Frauenbefreiung", FIS, September/October 1932, pp. 6-7.

Rühle-Gerstel, op. cit., p. 140.

2. Ibid., pp. 140-41.

increasingly stayed away, in disgust. The radicals were pleased to publicise the BDF's "generation problem" in Die Frau im Staat, and Lida Gustava Heymann took obvious pleasure in advising the discontented young that the Open Door International was more their style¹. But the radicals also faced a generation problem in the WILPF, where the younger women felt that the methods and ideals of the older leadership were now out of date, but where they again failed to oust the old guard - in spite of their claim that they were anxious to stand down - and so the system remained unchanged in this camp, too².

D. The End of the Women's Organisations under the Nazis

No doubt division, discussion and disputes were considered healthy inside the democratic forms of the Weimar Republic. The stalemate within the BDF, particularly, could probably have been resolved either by a determined take-over bid by the young within it, or else by its being eclipsed by a new, vital movement composed of the disaffected young. In a way, of course, it could be said that this latter possibility did come about, with the attraction of even some feminists to what seemed to be a new and vital movement, National Socialism, although the majority of them were quite clearly against it. But, as Alice Rühle-Gerstel commented, "Women as a whole have no single representative"³, and the splits and divisions between and within the middle-class and socialist groups concerned with women's affairs were to

1. Lida Gustava Heymann, op. cit., p. 7.

2. "Die IX. Tagung des Deutschen Zweiges der Internationalen Frauenliga für Frieden und Freiheit", FIS, November 1929, pp. 6-7.

3. Rühle-Gerstel, op. cit., p. 142.

prove critical in undermining potentially effective opposition from women of all shades of feminist opinion, who could not, even in the face of a common danger, act in concert.

And yet, it is clear that most groups in the feminist camp underestimated the Nazi threat in one way or another. Indeed, the radicals were well aware of what a Nazi accession to power would mean for their movement and their campaign¹; but Lida Gustava Heymann, writing in autumn 1932, showed how unrealistic she was by claiming that Hitler's party did not spell a real danger, since the cause of feminism was going from strength to strength. In any case, she added, "Dictatorships never last long"². A representative of the DVP, writing in the party's Women's Review early in 1932, was more pessimistic:

"The women's movement finds itself at the present time in a crisis of a kind which it has never in all its history experienced.... The most threatening danger seems to lie in the political arena, since a movement with the great political momentum, which National Socialism currently has, has set itself decisively and unequivocally against the ideals and aims of the women's movement. The women's movement is portrayed in the party's press generally and without restraint as a manifestation of decadence"³.

The BDF, however, demonstrated how little it comprehended the nature of Nazism as late as March 1933. Its questionnaire, sent to all political parties, asking how many women candidates were being presented by each⁴,

1. Lida Gustava Heymann, "Nachkriegspsychose", FiS, March 1931, pp. 1-2.

Grete Stoffel, "Die Arbeitslosigkeit und die Frauenarbeit", FiS, August/September 1931, p. 5.

2. Lida Gustava Heymann, "Frauenbefreiung", FiS, September/October 1932, p. 6.

3. BA, R45II/64, DVP Reichsgeschäftsstelle, Frauenrundschau 4 March, 1932, "Nationalsozialisten und Frau", p. 1141.

4. Report in BF, March 1933. pp. 8-9.

was clearly based on two assumptions, that elections still meant something in Germany, and that political parties still wielded influence and would continue to do so; within a few months, both these assumptions were to be proved invalid, and the women's movement, in all its branches, effectively destroyed.

Even before all the parties were dissolved and the Nazis in unchallenged control of the state it was made clear that no branch of the women's movement was to be allowed to continue in existence. After all, every point on which the separate groups agreed was anathema to the NSDAP: pacifism, internationalism, feminism, individualism were the bogeys - along with the menace of "Bolshevism", which for the Nazis covered the whole spectrum of left-wing thought - which they were sworn to destroy. The tragedy of the women's movement was, then, that its various warring factions could not temporarily sink their differences to present a united front to a party that was the enemy of all of them. The Nazis were able to pick off each group one by one, without any concerted protest. The entire process paralleled that taking place on the purely political front. Perhaps, given the skill, speed and good fortune of the Nazis even a united feminist movement could have achieved little; on the other hand, its chances of survival would no doubt have been considerably greater had there not been the disarray and the feeling of discouragement that was so obvious in feminist circles in the early 1930s.

The women's organisations associated with the KPD and the SPD were the first to go, naturally succumbing when their respective party and trade union movement were banned. Those who were not arrested and who refused to emigrate were at least temporarily hamstrung, although a

left-wing underground organisation did develop quite rapidly. It was, however, a resistance movement of which some women - notably the lawyer, Hilde Benjamin (KPD), Joanna Kirchner (SPD)¹, and Eva Schulze-Knabe (KPD)² - were members, and not at all a specifically women's movement. There was, after all, only the one issue at this time, the need to overthrow the Nazi regime. The radical feminists were considered by the Nazis to be less dangerous, not being associated with a large party machine, and so the Government contented itself with banning their publications and ridiculing their leaders in the Nazi Party's press³. But Nazi vindictiveness and greed were demonstrated when it was announced in February 1935 that

"On the grounds of the regulations concerning the confiscation of property of Communists and enemies of the state and the people, the property of the journalists Dr. Anita Augspurg and Lida Gustava Heymann has been confiscated, to the benefit of the state of Bavaria"⁴.

This was the penalty to be paid by those denied the right to pursue their profession; they had seen their publications banned, their organisations dissolved, and in the end had seen no alternative to emigration, forfeiting in the process their personal possessions.

With the left-wing organisations outlawed and their leaders disgraced, the conservatives, who had long hated the women's movement

1. Erich Stockhorst, Fünftausend Köpfe: Wer war was im Dritten Reich, Bruchsal, 1967, pp. 51 and 233.
2. BDC, P262, Der Oberreichsanwalt beim Volksgerichtshof, "Anklageschrift", 2 December, 1941, pp. 37-40.
3. F. Hamm, "Lida Gustava Heymann 'verteidigt' die deutsche Frau", VB, 12 July, 1933.
4. Report in FZ, 1 February, 1935.

in any of its manifestations, felt that their hour had come, and wholeheartedly pledged themselves to serve the new regime¹. The Ring Nationaler Frauenbünde, an association of conservative women's organisations, wrote to Hitler in April 1933 welcoming the "considerable efforts of the National Government to give strong leadership", and putting their organisation completely at his disposal². Lammers replied that Hitler graciously acknowledged "the willingness of the nationalist women to collaborate with the state"³. But it was soon to become apparent that the leadership of women's organisations, as of all others in the Nazi state, would be in the hands of party members, and that even the most compliant of conservative groups could no longer hope to retain its own identity.

A number of the conservative organisations hoped to save themselves by demonstrating their loyalty to the new regime in a concrete way; the Evangelical Women's Association, the National Association of German Housewives and the Bund Königin Luise (Queen Luise League), among others, at once joined the new Nazi association of women's organisations, the Frauenfront⁴. The leader of the Bund Königin Luise, Frau von Hadeln, was rewarded with the post of deputy leader of the Frauenfront, whose leader was an enthusiastic young Nazi, Lydia Gottschewski⁵. But early in 1934 a strong propaganda action was

1. See, e.g., Dora Hasselblatt (ed.), Wir Frauen und die Nationale Bewegung, Hamburg, 1933, which contains articles by non-Nazi women which are generally favourable towards Nazism.

2. BA, R43II/427, letter of ? April, 1933 (exact date not given).

3. Ibid., letter of 12 May, 1933.

4. Clifford Kirkpatrick, Woman in Nazi Germany, London, 1939, p. 57.

5. BDC, Akten des Obersten Parteigerichts, 2684/34, letter from Walter Buch to Gottfried Krummacker, 20 September, 1933.

launched to bring about the dissolution of the BKL; for example, in March 1934 the Party's press publicised the speech in which two of the BKL's former office-holders declared that they had resigned their posts because they had preferred to become ordinary members of the Nazis' women's organisation than to be officials of any other group¹. Within a month of this incident, the BKL had dissolved itself, on 1 April, 1934², although Hitler had promised Frau von Hadeln his protection for her organisation, at the same time as he had made a similar promise to Seldte about the Stahlhelm³. Other groups lasted a little longer, but it was only a matter of time before a Nazi monopoly was enforced in this area, as in most others. At the end of October 1935, the Deutscher Frauenbund, the DNVP's leading women's organisation, was dissolved; the Stahlhelmfrauenbund's turn came a week later; and in November 1936 the Flottenbund deutscher Frauen ceased to exist⁴. These organisations were allowed to survive as long because they were no threat to the Nazis, but their continued existence meant that there was diversity of a kind that the Nazis could not tolerate, and so they had, eventually, to be eliminated.

Of the organisations to which the Nazis had an intrinsic objection the liberal ones were treated with the least severity. Indeed, their leaders suffered, in that they were promptly dismissed from

1. "Tagung der NS-Frauenschaft", VB, 7 March, 1934.

2. BA, Slg.Sch., 230, Altona Gau-Verordnungsblatt 2/34, 1 March, 1934.

3. BDC, op. cit.

4. "5 Jahre Reichsfrauenführung", FK, January 1939, p. 4.

positions they held in the public service, whether as civil servants, teachers, lawyers or lecturers, on grounds of "political unreliability"; a law of 7 April, 1933 permitted this, as it also made possible the dismissal of non-"Aryans" from the public service¹. Thus, at a stroke, the Government purged vital areas of employment, particularly the highly sensitive teaching profession, which had been a stronghold of feminism². It was no doubt a severe blow to many women, to all those who held less exalted positions than Gertrud Bäumer, who was one of the first to suffer, but positions which gave them considerable interest and satisfaction nevertheless³. But they were, within the limits of Goebbels's censors, allowed to continue publishing their writings, and were deprived of neither their personal freedom nor their property, in contrast with the radicals and socialists.

In spite of the speed and ruthlessness with which the Nazis moved, the BDF's leaders still hoped that their organisations would be able to put up effective resistance to a complete takeover. But those which did make any show of resistance were summarily dissolved, so that Gertrud Bäumer and her associates quickly came to the conclusion that, for them and for the women they felt they still had a duty to represent, the most important thing was survival. Gertrud Bäumer

1. "Gesetz zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums", RGB, 1933 I, 7 April, 1933, pp. 175-77.
2. More will be said about the effects of Nazi legislation on women in professional positions in Chapter 5.
3. Gertrud Bäumer wrote to Emmy Beckmann to commiserate with her after her own dismissal and then Emmy Beckmann's, from her position in the Hamburg education administration, agreeing with an earlier comment of the latter's that such a position was not just a job, but a source of interest and pleasure. Beckmann, op. cit., letter of 13 April, 1933, p. 49.

still believed, in April 1933, that if the middle-class women's organisations showed docility in joining the Frauenfront, and sacrificed some of their leaders to whom the Nazis chiefly objected, they would be able to carry on at least some of their former work, having accepted the supreme leadership of the Nazi organisation¹. This mistaken belief was compounded by another: she also felt that the Nazi women's organisation would now be cast in the role of defender of the rights and position of women, and that a new women's movement would develop as a reaction to the Nazis' promised restrictions on women in public life, the professions and employment. This would be something in which, she confided to her close friend Emmy Beckmann, she would like to be able to participate. She maintained her optimism on this account throughout all the vicissitudes of the summer of 1933², and even in May 1934 still believed that "the new women's movement is coming"³.

But by this time the whole edifice of the movement built up over a period of almost seventy years had ceased to exist, and the continued publication of the chief magazine of the BDF, Gertrud Bäumer's Die Frau, was the only public reminder - apart from attacks on the

1. Beckmann, op. cit., pp. 50-51.

2. Ibid.

Ibid., letter from Gertrud Bäumer to Helene König, 29 July, 1933.

BA, Kl.Erw., no. 296-(1), letter from Gertrud Bäumer to Dorothee von Velsen, 23 October, 1933, p. 20.

3. Beckmann, op. cit., letter from Gertrud Bäumer to Helene König, 2 May, 1934, p. 68.

"women's rightists" in the Nazi press - that it had ever existed. On 15 May, 1933, the leaders of the BDF had seen no alternative to the dissolution of their organisation; the taking over of many of its constituents by Nazi groups had left the BDF without a raison d'être, and its leaders could only advise the remaining groups to accommodate themselves to the new order as they saw fit¹. The tactic of co-operation with the new regime did help to save one of the feminists' most valued organisations, the Deutscher Akademikerinnenbund, an association of professional women, but only temporarily. Although, as Gertrud Bäumer admitted in November 1934, it had declared itself ready to make any concession necessary for survival², it was finally dissolved just over a year later³. By this time it was in any case redundant, since the Nazis had established their own Reichsbund deutscher Akademikerinnen, which was safely under the leadership of a trusted official of the Nazi Teachers' League, Friederike Matthias⁴.

The dissolution of the various organisations, of a political, vocational, religious, charitable and purely social character, was one aspect of the change brought about in women's activities by the Nazi assumption of power and Gleichschaltung (co-ordination) in 1933. In

1. Gertrud Bäumer, "'Das Haus ist zerfallen'", Die Frau, June 1933, p. 513.

Evans, op. cit., pp. 339-45, describes some of the events immediately preceding the dissolution of the BDF, although he does not give references for some of the points he makes. His outright condemnation of the leaders of the BDF for their attempt to survive by making concessions to the Nazis seems unduly harsh, given the difficulty of their situation.

2. BA, Kl.Erw., no. 296-(1), letter from Gertrud Bäumer to Dorothee von Velsen, 15 November, 1934, p. 39.
3. FK, loc. cit.
4. "Aus dem NSLB", Die deutsche höhere Schule, 1935, no. 10, p. 10.

addition, the establishment of a one-party State in July of that year meant the end of what political power and influence women had had since 1918, however much it had been despised by the more militant feminists. The fundamental Nazi insistence that women should not be involved in politics and should not play a leading role in the party itself naturally brought an end to female representation in the Reichstag once the other parties had been either dissolved or outlawed. Thus, in a way, the situation could be said to have reverted to "normal", since the only period in which women had been permitted to play a full part in politics had been one of scarcely more than a decade, and that decade or so had been a period of instability and frustration for the majority of Germans. How much women lost in 1933 is perhaps questionable, given the relegation of the Reichstag to purely formal activities; but, at the same time, it was clear that all positions of power in the State, as in the Nazi Party, were, and would remain, in the hands of men. Gertrud Bäumer had not been wrong when she had detected signs of feminism within the Nazis' own ranks, but she had failed to appreciate that the exponents of feminist ideas within the party would be eliminated as effectively from the public eye as those outside the party had been, and given no opportunity to build up a viable base of support.

But if women were, once again, to be denied a share in the political affairs of the nation this did not mean that they were also - as some had feared and others had hoped - to be excluded from all other positions and functions outside the realm of home and family. In the major areas of employment, higher education and the professions, as will be shown, the wilder Nazi predictions that in the Third Reich there would be a sharp reduction in the number of

women admitted or allowed to continue in their position were not realised. Indeed there were some attempts to restrict women's activities in these areas, but as the 1930s progressed, with the build-up of an economy geared to the possibility of limited war, women were looked to increasingly to fill vacancies for which there was not an adequate supply of men, even in areas in which they had not formerly been well represented. This development, which was greatly intensified once Germany was at war, can no doubt be viewed as a retreat from policy which had been declared "fundamental", even "immutable". But simply to say that is to accept the superficial and to fail to appreciate the essentially long-term view the Nazis themselves had adopted. In the "thousand-year Reich" there had to be priorities, even among basic tenets of ideology, so that apparent inconsistencies emerge; in the long term, however, all the Nazis' principles were supposed to be compatible. The first priority was the securing for the "Aryan" race of an impregnable position in the world, before which all others, including those regarding the nature and function of women, had to give way. But it is clear that the Nazis did expect that, once they had achieved this position, their other policies, including the return of women to their "natural occupations", could be implemented.

In the meantime, there were indications during the 1930s of what this would mean. The insistence of the Nazis on the separation of the sexes allowed, for example, the creation of Nazi organisations for women which perhaps had little real power, but whose actual operation was in the hands of the women themselves, thus providing a limited amount of autonomy; this was permitted because the leadership of the organisations showed little inclination to step out of line.

There were developments within the realm of marriage and the family which were sometimes, in themselves, surprisingly close to what feminists and even socialists had called for in previous decades, although the Nazis introduced them for different motives: policy towards the unmarried mother and the reform of the divorce law are two examples of this. In other aspects, of course - notably the sensitive area of abortion - the Nazi view was diametrically opposed to what the radical feminists and the socialists had demanded.

These similarities and differences were the result of a fundamental difference between the ideologies - using the term loosely - of Nazis on the one hand and liberals and socialists on the other. The latter believed that the good of the individual, within society, was intrinsically worth pursuing, and that the State should protect and further the interests of its citizens. The Nazis, on the other hand, put the good of the State before the interests of its citizens, so that the State's demands always took precedence and the desires and needs of its citizens were, if it were found to be necessary, sacrificed. Much of Nazi policy was conditioned by a revulsion against the "liberal individualism" of the Weimar Republic which, in the Nazi view, was one of the main causes of Germany's economic, political and social problems. The desire to make Germany great once more would therefore require the stamping out of all vestiges of this attitude. This motive is fundamental to an understanding of Government policy towards women, with its apparent volte-faces at times, throughout the Nazi period.

CHAPTER TWO

Marriage and MoralsIntroduction

The one factor which has, above all, determined the role of women in society is their child-bearing function. The single or childless married woman has found her status and opportunities to a great extent conditioned - and at times restricted - by the fact that most women, a small minority of them unmarried, become mothers at some time, generally between the ages of twenty and forty. The unmarried mother has, of course, always faced special problems which have been more or less oppressive depending on the mores of the society in which she has lived; for example, in some German states after the carnage of the Thirty Years' War normally severe attitudes towards the unmarried mother were moderated, for reasons of population policy¹. Married women with children have changed, or perhaps developed, their aspirations radically in the last century, chiefly as a result of the spread of contraceptive information; this has not, however, brought to an end the resort to the crudest and probably the oldest method of birth control, abortion. The aspirations of women, then, and their desire to control their reproductive capacity, clearly developed ahead of the dissemination of accurate contraceptive advice, if perhaps not ahead of the development of reliable contraceptives.

Given the important place of reproduction in the life of women, it will be instructive to examine the central position of population

1. "Population policy" is used in this thesis to denote a policy designed to encourage the raising of the birth rate; as such, it may be proposed or espoused by a government, a party, a group, or an individual.

problems in Germany in the 1930s, to consider the incentives to procreate and the availability of contraceptives and abortion, and to discuss the position of the unmarried mother. In addition, the status of women in marriage is directly relevant to this discussion, as also is the position of women when a divorce takes place. What emerges from studying this area is that while it held a constant fascination for all political parties, for the Churches, and for feminists of all shades, it was only at the two extremes, among Communists and Nazis, that there was - from their opposing points of view - an obsessive single-mindedness.

To the German Communists in the 1920s and early 1930s, population policy was a nationalistic, capitalist irrelevance, another means of using the working class in a way which brought them only misery. The KPD therefore campaigned vigorously for the right of the individual to limit his - or, more important, her - reproductive capacity to any extent and by any means. The Nazi view was that the nation needed children, and so children must be provided; any incentive was justifiable, as also was the removal of all means of limiting reproduction. This last point immediately created some common ground between the Nazis and the Churches, and heightened the latter's already implacable antagonism towards the KPD, although later Nazi policies brought strong criticism from the Roman Catholic Church. But there were also similarities between the policies of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia, from 1936 onwards, as the latter felt the need to encourage population growth on a rapid and massive scale in view of the high rate of mortality as a result of war, civil war, famine and disease, followed by the increasing international tension of the 1930s.

A. The Birth Rate and Population Policy

As women began to reject in the later nineteenth century the inevitability of frequent child-bearing in marriage, this, combined with generally vague ideas about emancipation, led to a slowing down of the birth rate after the abnormally high level of the 1870s and, to a lesser extent, the 1880s and 1890s. Although an unprecedentedly large number of children was born in the first decade of the twentieth century, with the figure around the two million mark every year, the actual rate of births, in relation to the size of the population, was declining steadily, and began to decline sharply from early in that decade into the war years¹. In addition to their own personal desire no longer to be cast in the role of child-bearing machine (Gebärmaschine), women had sometimes chosen, sometimes been compelled for financial reasons, to continue or to resume working outside the home after marriage, particularly from the 1870s. And there was a growing awareness that a few children could be afforded a better start in life, while a large family could mean long-term poverty and poor prospects for the children. The limitation of families was a deliberate choice, which the development of more

1. The following table illustrates this development:

Period	Average no. of live births per year	Live births per 1,000 of the population
1871-80	1,674,843	39
1881-90	1,732,015	37
1891-1900	1,960,296	36
1901-10	1,997,364	33
1911-14	1,849,428	28

Calculated from figures in St.J.; 1911, p. 22; 1933, p. 27; 1934 p. 27.

reliable contraceptives in the later nineteenth century made a real possibility¹.

While there had been growing official concern at the decline in the birth rate before the Great War, there was much more willingness to discuss population policy, and sexual matters generally, in the more liberal atmosphere of the Weimar Republic. More than that, the huge losses in the war and at the peace settlement, as well as the disastrous slump in the war-time birth rate², made the formulation of a positive population policy highly desirable, even, some thought, essential. The problem was heightened by the increase in the surplus of women in the population, from about 800,000 before the war to about 2.8 million after it, as a direct result of military casualties³; many potential mothers would not be able to find a husband, and while unmarried motherhood remained socially unacceptable this meant that the birth rate was likely to continue to decline.

It was, in any case, precisely the more liberal climate which brought two basic elements into conflict: the general desire, on the part of conservatives, liberals and Social Democrats alike, to

1. K. M. Bolte and Dieter Kappe, Struktur und Entwicklung der Bevölkerung, Opladen, 1964, pp. 30-31.

J. Peel, "The Manufacturing and Retailing of Contraceptives in England", Population Studies, 1963-64, p. 117.

2. The birth rate dropped to around 14 live births per 1,000 inhabitants in 1917 and 1918, i.e. to half of the already diminished pre-war level. Figures from St.J., 1933, p. 27.
3. The population of Germany by sex in 1910 and in October 1919 (i.e. after the surrender of territory at the Peace Settlement) was as follows:

	1910	1919
men	32,040,166	29,011,216
women	32,885,827	31,887,368

Figures from St.J.: 1919, p. 1; 1920, p. 1.

reverse the decline in the birth rate and encourage a much higher rate of population growth was not altogether compatible with the support of liberals and socialists for demands that the Draconian abortion law be mitigated, or even repealed, and that contraceptive advice be made freely available. The result of this conflict of interests was that the 1920s went by - with the birth rate declining steeply and steadily back to the war-time level after the transient post-war revival¹ - without any serious attempt being made by governments to formulate a national population policy². This made Weimar politicians an easy prey for the National Socialists, who claimed that they were standing idly by while the German nation died out.

But there was a Reichstag Population Policy Committee, on which Gertrud Bäumer was the DDP's representative³, and at last in January 1930 Severing, as Reich Minister of the Interior, demonstrated his concern by calling a conference to discuss the problem and to try to find possible remedies. The result was a national Standing Committee on Population Policy, which at its meetings discussed proposals for tax incentives to encourage procreation, protection for the pregnant woman and special care for infants. The guiding principle was to be "protection and aid for women who want children", so that the pro-natalist motive was encouraged but not aggressively propagated.

1. The birth rate rose to between 20 and 25 for the years 1919-25, but then dropped every year, to reach 15 in 1932. Figures from St.J., loc. cit.

2. Bolte and Kappe, op. cit., p. 44.

3. HA, reel 37, fol. 736, "Mitteilungen des Reichsfrauenausschusses der DDP", no. 5, 11 August, 1929.

Clearly, this was a real attempt to resolve the conflict between the growing individual desire to limit families and the national need for more children. The formula was also sufficiently undefined so that the political and ideological differences between the groups favouring a population policy would not prevent the search for a solution¹.

The finding of a solution was becoming particularly urgent, since the renewed decline in the birth rate in the later 1920s had come at a time when the number of women of child-bearing age had actually been steadily increasing². According to an official report, even worse was in store: it was estimated that there would be a continued rise in the number of marriages - and therefore, it was hoped, also in the number of births - until 1935, but there would then be a decline as the generation of the lean war-time years of birth reached the age at which they were most likely to marry and reproduce; thus, from the later 1930s an even sharper decline in the birth rate could be expected³.

In the absence of a national population policy, the parties were active in devising their own policies. The women's committee of the DDP, for example, drew up a document which, it hoped, would form the basis for discussions in the party's local groups. The central point of concern was less the size than the quality of the population, quality in "biological, social and mental" terms, which was to be achieved by positive means including improved social welfare and the

1. "Reichsausschuss für Bevölkerungsfragen", AfB, 1931, pp. 62-65.

2. Information from figures in St.J., 1932, p. 29.

3. Report in WuS, 1930, no. 24, p. 972.

encouragement of physical education in schools. Negative measures, such as the discouragement of certain categories of people from procreating, were not mentioned. The DDP women were characteristically moderate, favouring tax reform to encourage large families but opposing the more blatant artificial incentives - which the Nazis would offer - which might be striven for per se, without a genuine desire for more children¹.

Moderation was also shown by a writer in the DVP's Women's Review, who put Germany's declining birth rate in its European perspective: the other countries of northern Europe, as well as Switzerland and the United States, she pointed out, were experiencing a similar trend; and the decline was less disastrous than might at first appear, she continued, since it was partially offset by the lower mortality rate among infants and children in the 1920s, as a result of medical advance and improved hygiene². Nevertheless, the low birth rates in the countries of northern and western Europe were a source of general anxiety, not least in Britain, particularly in relation to the rapidly growing populations of eastern European countries³. But it was only the Nazis in Germany who saw this as a

1. BA, R45III/43, Reichsfrauenausschuss der DDP, "Grundsätze einer deutschen Bevölkerungspolitik", 23 April, 1930, pp. 52-54.

2. BA, R45II/64, Frauenrundschau, 25 February, 1932, "Zerfall der Familie?", p. 1133.

The decline in the incidence of infant mortality in Germany was as follows: in 1905, 20% of babies born alive died in infancy; in 1913 the figure was 15%; in 1930 it was 8.5%. The rate was always higher among illegitimate than among legitimate children. Figures from St.J.: 1934, p. 48; 1935, p. 56.

3. "Internationaler Kongress für Bevölkerungswissenschaft" Der Öffentliche Gesundheitsdienst, 5 December, 1935, pp. 645-80.

real threat to the west's future, and to Germany, with her strategic position in the centre of Europe, particularly.

Continuing concern about the birth rate contributed to the intensification of interest in the health and care of pregnant women and mothers in the late 1920s and early 1930s. The sickness insurance funds now provided hospital treatment and maternity benefit for women members and female dependants of members, and in 1925 the Central Union of German Sickness Insurance Funds opened a research institute for the study of women's diseases. This was in part a response to the increase in the number of women members of insurance funds in the 1920s, a reflection of women's regarding employment as a long-term rather than a temporary activity. The strain which full-time employment put on married women was reflected in the "remarkable increase in the frequency of illness during the years of sexual activity"¹. This was a source of deep concern, as was the possible deleterious effect on young girls' reproductive capacity of employment in unhealthy occupations². Standards of hygiene in childbirth were also criticised, and the more thorough training of doctors and midwives in the conduct of a confinement and post-natal care were warmly recommended³. But proposals that the Government itself make financial provision for expectant and nursing mothers

1. Franz Goldmann and Alfred Grotjahn, "The German Sickness Insurance Funds", ILO Studies and Reports, Series M, no. 8, Geneva, 1928, pp. 40-42, 64.

2. Hugo Sellheim in AfFr, 1931-32, p. 189.

3. "Bericht über die 22. Tagung der deutschen Gesellschaft für Gynäkologie, Frankfurt-am-Main, 27.-30.V.1931", AfFr, 1931-32, pp. 156-57.

came to nothing¹; the Government was in no mood to incur new commitments when it could barely meet existing ones in the depression.

The Nazis, as strong pro-natalists, proceeded in this matter in more single-minded fashion. In June 1935 a law was prepared for the provision of improved maternity benefit and post-natal care; characteristically, it was to be the insurance funds, and not the State, which would shoulder the burden of extra expenditure². In addition, the various midwives' organisations were centralised into one national association, and their education and professional status improved³. There was, similarly, the centralisation of all maternity advice centres into the "Mother and Child" branch of the Nazi welfare organisation, the NSV. Its bureaux provided care and assistance, in co-operation with the local health offices, and gave advice on, and even sometimes aid for, financial problems. Homes were provided for single women, "to serve the campaign against abortion", and in 1935 Frick, the Minister of the Interior, ordered that every pregnant woman should attend an advisory centre⁴, no doubt to prevent or detect any resort to abortion, and to try to ensure that every desirable pregnancy was noted and supervised. It was claimed in mid-1938 that

1. BA, R2/18554, Reichstag motions of 22 November, 1930, and 15 October, 1931.
2. BA, R2/18554, letters from Seldte to Lammers, 8 June, 1935 and from Schwerin von Krosigk to Seldte, 20 June, 1935.
3. BA, R36/1884, correspondence for 1934.

Ibid., letters from the Governor of East Prussia to the Deutscher Gemeindetag, 3 March, 1937, and vice-versa, 11 March, 1937.

4. Egon Farrensteiner, "Schwangerenfürsorge und Geburt", doctoral dissertation for Rostock University, 1939, p. 7.

the NSV had 25,000 advice centres in its "Mother and Child section" throughout the country, and that more than ten million women had so far attended them¹.

The Nazis liked to boast about their achievements in improving maternity services and child care; it cannot be disputed that they did indeed make progress in this field - for good, "Aryan" citizens who were sound in mind and body, and for them only. Anxiety at the rising number of premature births in the mid-1930s, and the high rate of mortality connected with them² suggested that the care afforded by the NSV was not fully adequate, and so the Hebammengesetz (Midwives' Law) was passed in 1938. This stated that "every German woman has the right to the assistance of a midwife", and "every pregnant woman has the duty to call in a midwife promptly"³. Nazi anxiety about the well-being of women before and during childbirth was simply based on the needs of the State, as they saw them: healthy parents were more likely to have healthy children, and strong children would make healthy parents for the next generation. In this context woman was indeed, as one writer put it, "arbiter over the life and death of her nation"⁴. Further, she was seen not merely as a child-bearing machine - as the Nazis' opponents claimed - but as the "first educator

1. BA, NSD17/RAK, July 1938, "Deutschlands Kinderschutz vorbildlich!" pp. 1-2.

2. Josef Brunn-Schulte-Wissing, "Die Frühgeburten - ihr Lebensschicksal in den ersten zehn Tagen und ihre bevölkerungspolitische Bedeutung", doctoral dissertation for Rostock University, 1937, p. 13.

Karl Heinz Grasshoff, "Das Schicksal der häuslichen Frühgeburten und ihre bevölkerungspolitische Bedeutung", doctoral dissertation for Rostock University, 1937, p. 9.

3. "Hebammengesetz", RGB, 1938 I, 21 December, 1938, pp. 1893-96.

4. Eva Kriner-Fischer, Die Frau als Richterin über Leben und Tod ihres Volkes, Berlin, 1937, pp. 3, 12-13.

of the new generation"¹, the person responsible for the healthy upbringing of her children, in both physical and moral terms, to be valuable citizens and parents². This was perhaps a hazardous situation for a dictatorship to encourage; the Nazis had therefore to encourage women to bear children, and also to give them a feeling of self-importance which would breed gratitude towards the regime which had, apparently, upgraded the status of mothers in the family and in society.

The first positive incentive to procreation came with the introduction of the Marriage Loan scheme, as part of the "Law to Reduce Unemployment" of 1 June, 1933. This provided that a couple intending to marry would be given a tax-free loan of up to RM 1,000³ - in vouchers for household goods, not cash - to help them to set up house at this difficult time. Repayment was to be at the rate of 1% per month, and was to begin three months after the loan had been made. The money for the loans was to be raised from a tax on all single persons - except those with children - who were eligible to pay income tax, at a rate of between 2% and 5% of their income, according to its size⁴. Within three weeks it was further decreed

1. Annemarie Bechem, "Die deutsche Mutter als Erzieherin", NS-Frauenwarte, April 1937, pp. 695-96.
2. Erich Siegel, Die Deutsche Frau im Rasseerwachen, Munich, 1934, pp. 16-17.
3. BA, NSD17/RAK, November 1936, Werner Hüttig, "Massnahmen zur Steigerung der deutschen Bevölkerungszahl", p. 3, states that the average amount of the loans made so far had been RM600.

Bry, op. cit., pp. 457-60, gives the average weekly earnings of women in 22 industries in 1936 as ranging between RM15 and RM27 per week; the average marriage loan therefore was equivalent to between about six and ten times the average monthly wage for these women, although it would be less attractive to, say, female bank employees, whose average monthly earnings in February 1934 were RM176, according to St.J., 1934, p. 278.

4. "Gesetz zur Verminderung der Arbeitslosigkeit", RGB, 1933 I, 1 June, 1933, pp. 326-29.



that the birth of a child would lead to the cancellation of 25% of the loan repayments, and to a moratorium of one year on repayments after the birth¹. Thus, the childless were to be penalised for not contributing to population growth, while loan-holders were to be encouraged to have a child as quickly as possible, and to follow that one with three more in a short space of time in order to have the maximum possible of the repayments cancelled. Dorothee von Velsen described in 1939 how a neighbour had said to her, in a broad accent, "so now I just need another baby and I shan't have to pay back any more"². This was the conclusion the Government hoped its "Aryan", healthy, "politically reliable" citizens would draw; those who did not fit this description were, naturally, excluded from this scheme for state-supported marriage and procreation³.

The marriage-loan scheme was reasonably popular, although the majority of couples either did not fall into the relevant categories or did not make application for a loan. The fact that the wife was required to give up work⁴ was undoubtedly a deterrent to many. In the last four months of 1933, when the scheme was first operational, 37% of the marriages contracted were loan-aided, with an above-average figure in Prussia and a lower than average figure in Bavaria,

1. "Durchführungsverordnung über die Gewährung von Ehestandsdarlehen (ED-DVO)", RGB, 1933 I, 20 June, 1933, p. 379.

2. BA, Kl.Erw., 296-(1), letter from Dorothee von Velsen to Gertrud Bäumer, 10 March, 1939, p. 55.

3. RGB, op. cit., p. 377.

"2. DVO über die Gewährung von Ehestandsdarlehen", RGB, 1933 I, 26 July, 1933, p. 540.

4. "Gesetz zur Verminderung der Arbeitslosigkeit", RGB, 1933 I, 1 June, 1933, pp. 326-27.

a relative position which continued for some years¹. Part of the reason for this difference was probably the fact that in agricultural Bavaria working wives were not in the category where they could be replaced by paid labour, as in industry; it would not have been worthwhile for a small farmer to pay a wage to a male labourer, hired to replace his wife who had retired, in order to obtain a loan. The revoking of the prohibition on the employment of the wife in a loan-aided marriage in the autumn of 1937² resulted in a sharp rise in the number of applications for loans, in both absolute and relative terms, so that in 1939 42% of all marriages contracted were assisted by loans, the highest percentage since the scheme began³, and a marked revival from the nadir of 24%, the figure for 1935⁴.

Two other factors helped to increase the popularity of the marriage-loan scheme in 1939: the relaxation of the restrictions on marriage at the end of August⁵ and the outbreak of war immediately after together led to an increase in hastily-contracted marriages, for a large number of which loan applications were made⁶. The

1. Information from St.J.: 1936, p. 42; 1937, p. 44; 1938, p. 48.
2. "Drittes Gesetz zur Änderung des Gesetzes über die Förderung der Eheschliessungen", RGB, 1937 I, 3 November, 1937, pp. 1158-59.
3. BA, NSD30/1836, Informationsdienst..., November 1938, "Ehestandsdarlehen in der neuesten Statistik".

Report in WuS, 1942, no. 2, p. 52.

4. St.J., 1936, p. 42.
5. "Verordnung zur Durchführung des Gesetzes zur Verhütung erbkranken Nachwuchses und des Ehegesundheitsgesetzes", RGB, 1939 I, 31 August, 1939, pp. 1560-61. More will be said about this in section B of this chapter.
6. WuS, loc. cit.

outbreak of war also led to requests for a moratorium on loan repayments by conscripts, since the burden of making them was bearing heavily on those receiving only their army pay. To help to spin out the loan, it was also suggested that the stipulation that only new furniture could be bought with the loan vouchers be rescinded since, in any case, industry could not supply the demand and already had indefinite waiting lists of customers¹.

The national women's organisation, the Deutsches Frauenwerk (DFW) saw the marriage-loan scheme as a possible means of winning more recruits to the courses of instruction it provided in domestic science and child care from 1934², but it was not until March 1937 that formal provision was made for this. Then, it was decreed that part of the marriage loan could be used to pay the fees for such a course³. One motive for this was the desire to educate women to economise at a time when Germany's resources - for domestic expenditure - were restricted⁴. As an added incentive to marriage-loan applicants to exercise this option, the Minister of Finance at the same time announced that the amount of the loan could be increased by RM 100 to cover the fees for the course and still leave the full amount of a normal loan for household purchases⁵, an offer which received a warm

1. IfZ, MA 441/1, frame 2-750356, BziL, 29 November, 1939.

2. BA, NSD30/1836, Informationsdienst..., December 1938, "Mitterschulung und Ehestandsdarlehen", p. 50.

3. "7. DVO über die Gewährung von Ehestandsdarlehen", RGB, 1937 I, 10 March, 1937, p. 292.

4. HA, reel 13, fol. 253, Reichsfrauenführung Abteilung Volkswirtschaft/Hauswirtschaft, "Rundschreiben FW 62/37", 4 July, 1937.

5. IfZ, MA 388, frame 726438, Reich Ministry of Finance, order of 29 September, 1937.

welcome in the section of the DFW which ran the courses¹.

The main purpose of the marriage loan scheme was, of course, the raising of the birth rate, and loud boasts were made about the success achieved in this direction. At the 1936 Party Rally Reinhardt, the Secretary of State whose brainchild the scheme was, announced that so far 620,000 marriages had been assisted by loans, and that already 425,000 children had been born to these marriages. Nevertheless, he went on to warn that these children were very largely the first-born in their family, and that at least another three children would have to follow each of them if the scheme was to be really worthwhile². He still showed optimism in the following year when he claimed that now 550,000 children had been born to loan-aided marriages, which was, he said, proportionately twice as many as to the other marriages contracted during the same period³. But still in 1938 it was reported that up to June of that year almost one million loans had been made altogether, and 840,000 children born to achieve partial cancellation of them⁴. This was, indeed, a considerable rise in births compared with the previous year, but hardly an impressive figure considering that the scheme had been in operation for almost five years.

Allowing for the natural time-lag of nine months between conception and birth, so that a proportion of the loans made by any

1. HA, op. cit., Reichsfrauenführung Abteilung Reichsmütterdienst, "Rundschreiben FW 92/37", 6 October, 1937. More will be said about the DFW and the Reichsmütterdienst in chapter 6.

2. BA, NSD17/RAK, November 1936, Werner Hüttig, "Massnahmen zur Steigerung der deutschen Bevölkerungszahl", p. 3.

3. Ibid., July 1937, Fritz Reinhardt, "Deutschland treibt Familienpolitik", p. 2.

4. BA, NSD30/1836, Informationsdienst..., November 1938, "Ehestandsdarlehen in der neuesten Statistik", p. 14.

given time could not have been partially cancelled by a birth, the impression remains that, on average, only one child was being born to each couple who had received a loan; for most people, the incentive of partial cancellation of the loan for each child was clearly not sufficient to encourage large families quickly. The granting of a loan could not disguise the fact that children would be a long-term financial burden. The number of births to couples in receipt of loans did rise, as a proportion of all live births, from a modest 11% in 1934 to 17.5% in 1937, and to 20.5% in 1939. In the first full year of the war, the figure rose even further, to 22%¹. But with loan-aided marriages on the whole constituting over 30% of all marriages from autumn 1933, and over 40% at the end of the decade, it is obvious that the marriage-loan scheme failed to have the sharp impact on the birth rate which had been anticipated when it was introduced in 1933.

The marriage-loan scheme was only one tactic used to try to provide incentives to Germans to have large families. Other schemes were based on either direct cash benefits or the elevation of mothers to the status of national heroines, or a combination of both. It was reported in March 1934, for example, that the local authorities in Darmstadt were already making rent rebates to large families and were now proposing to issue cards to their 1,500 mothers with three or more children which would allow them to go to the theatre free of charge on certain evenings². This set an example to other authorities, so that in Camburg, near Halle, it was announced that the twenty-four large

1. Figures from St.J.: 1936, p. 42; 1938, p. 48; 1939/40, p. 53; 1941/42, p. 75.

2. "Theaterfreiplätze für kinderreiche Mütter", FZ, 6 March, 1934.

families in the area would have to pay only half of the normal water rate; it was hoped, in addition, to charge them half price for the use of electricity¹. On the other side, the Völkischer Beobachter announced that Honour Cards were to be presented to all mothers with at least three children under the age of ten. The cards were to carry on the reverse a request to all offices and shops to give the holder preferential treatment, while on the front there would be a picture of a mother surrounded by small children with the legend: "The most beautiful name the world over is Mother"².

The exhortation seems not to have had the desired effect, however, since there were complaints from parents that preferential treatment was often not being given to large families and to mothers with small children in shops and offices. The chief offenders seem to have been the Government's own departments, since it was claimed that parents were often told at Employment Exchanges or at welfare offices that having several children was not a satisfactory reason for receiving special treatment. The order therefore went out again that it was the duty of every civil servant who dealt with those in need of aid or advice to discriminate in favour of those with large families³. Three or four children were considered more or less sufficient for the term "large family", although, it was constantly stressed, this sort of figure should in no way be considered an upper

1. Report in FZ, 28 September, 1934.

2. "Ehrenkarte für Mütter", VB, 18 November, 1934.

3. "Bevorzugte Behandlung Kinderreicher", Fränkische Tageszeitung, 5 November, 1934.

limit; after all, for every childless marriage the nation needed a family of six or more children by way of compensation, if the declining birth rate of the previous twenty years was to be reversed and made good. The Nazis' real aim was to achieve a return to the large family of the later nineteenth century, so that Germany could return to the prosperity and expansion which had accompanied the high birth rate of that period¹.

The concessions made to large families, and especially to their mothers, by local authorities had the twin virtues of costing the central government nothing, while furthering its policy, and providing favourable propaganda. They could not, however, be a real substitute for direct governmental action in the Nazi State to achieve the desideratum of national uniformity. Accordingly, the first general measure came in September 1935, with the provision that large families should receive a bonus from the funds accumulated for the marriage-loan scheme, if they applied for it². The conditions were that the family should have four or more children under sixteen living in the parental home and that - in addition to the now inevitable clauses pertaining to "racial health" and physical and mental fitness - the family be in financial straits³. It was claimed that up to the end of 1935 alone, as a result of Germany's stronger economic position, about 300,000 children benefited from the bonus, which

1. "Aufruf des Ehrenführerringes des Reichsbundes der Kinderreichen", VB, 12 December, 1935.
2. "Verordnung über die Gewährung von Kinderbeihilfen an kinderreiche Familien", RGB, 1935 I, 15 September, 1935, p. 1160.
3. "Durchführungsbestimmungen zur Verordnung über die Gewährung von Kinderbeihilfen an kinderreiche Familien", RGB, 1935 I, 26 September, 1935, p. 1206.

amounted to RM 100 for each child¹. Then, in March 1936, it was announced that, instead, large families should be afforded recurrent State support²; and further benefits followed in the next few years³. The financial incentives had to be accompanied by a propaganda campaign to try to persuade women, particularly, that large families were not - as the liberals of the 1920s were alleged to have insisted - "stupid and needy"⁴, although the Nazis did have to admit, at least privately, that there were large families which were "anti-social" which, naturally enough, were not to be supported by the State⁵.

The propaganda aspects of the incentives to women to procreate particularly commended themselves to the Government since they were inexpensive⁶. Accordingly, there was a campaign to elevate motherhood to a position of the highest esteem in the nation. The Nazis had already turned Mother's Day - a moveable feast generally held

1. Wilfrid Bade, "Der Weg des Dritten Reiches", Lübeck, 1936, p. 14.
2. "Verordnung zur Änderung der Verordnung über die Gewährung von Kinderbeihilfen an kinderreiche Familien", RGB, 1936 I, 24 March, 1936, p. 252.
3. E.g., "Ausbildungsbeihilfen für Kinderreiche Familien", Alfred Homeyer, Die Neuordnung des höheren Schulwesens im Dritten Reich, Berlin, 1943, p. F6.
4. Report in NS-Frauenwarte, 1936-37, p. 730.
5. BDC, Slg.Sch., 212, Kreisleitung Marktheidenfeld-Karlstadt, "Rundschreiben an alle Ortsgruppenleiter der NSDAP", 24 January, 1941.
6. Nowhere was this more clearly demonstrated than in the Nazis' taking over of the Reichsbund der Kinderreichen to act as a propaganda organisation. All "racially pure" parents of four children were encouraged to become full members, while those with three could have probationary status. But the RdK gave no aid to large families; these were merely to be gathered together as good examples for the rest of the nation to emulate. See BDC, Slg. Sch., 212, particularly, on this. Reasons of space prevent a fuller treatment of the RdK here, although it is mentioned briefly in section C of this chapter.

about May 10th - into a festival of national celebration of "how fine and noble it is to be a mother, and how wonderful a thing it is to have a mother", as Frick sentimentally put it in his message for the appropriate day in 1935¹. Hitler made periodic references to the importance of motherhood in speeches which were designed to refute foreign propaganda about the "enslavement" of women in Nazi Germany as well as to encourage German women to fulfil their own instinctive desires, as well as the nation's needs, by having children. At the 1935 Party Rally he made his famous remark "The woman, too, has her battlefield", the battle being that of the birth-rate², while two years later, again at Nuremberg, he spoke thus:

"If to-day a female lawyer achieves great things and nearby there lives a mother with five, six, seven children, all of them healthy and well brought up, then I would say: from the point of view of the eternal benefit to our people the woman who has borne and brought up children and who has therefore given our nation life in the future, has achieved more and done more!"³

This was, in fact, a two-pronged attack, since Hitler's opposition to the practice of law by women had only a month earlier been demonstrated in an order restricting it⁴.

The Honour Cards issued in 1934 to prolific mothers were, it transpired, only the first step in providing symbols of the esteem in

1. "Reichsminister Dr. Frick zum Muttertag am 12. Mai", VB, 11 May, 1935.
2. Max Domarus, Hitler: Reden und Proklamationen, 1932-45, Würzburg, 1962, vol. 1, p. 531.
3. BA, NSD17/RAK, October 1936, "Der Führer Adolf Hitler über die Aufgaben der deutschen Frau", p. 1.
4. For a full discussion of this see chapter 5.

which the nation held its mothers. At the end of 1938 it was announced that on Mother's Day in 1939 three million prolific mothers of good "Aryan" stock would be presented with the new Honour Cross of the German Mother by Party notables. The legend on the reverse of the cross was to be: "The child ennobles the Mother!"¹. Hess explained that mothers of good character who had at least four children were eligible for the cross, which would be awarded in three grades, according to the actual number of children². How far this development prompted the institution of the Order of Glorious Motherhood in the Soviet Union in 1944 for particularly fecund women and, similarly, as one of a number of incentives at this time to encourage rapid population growth³, is uncertain, but the parallel is indeed striking.

In their anxiety to promote procreation, and to avoid excessive Government expenditure in the process, the Nazis went to lengths which can only be considered absurd. Presenting an Honour Cross to prolific mothers was perhaps peculiar, but positively eccentric was the order that members of the Hitler Youth must salute women wearing the cross⁴. No doubt it was intended to impress on the young that these women were living examples of what they should themselves aim to achieve, in

1. "Das Ehrenkreuz der Deutschen Mutter", VB, 25 December, 1938.

2. "Welche Mutter erhält das Ehrenkreuz", VB, 27 December, 1938.

BA, NSD3/5, Verfügungen, Anordnungen, Bekanntgaben, vol. 1, "A. 37/39 vom 15.2.39 - Verleihung des Ehrenkreuzes der deutschen Mutter. Merkblatt für die Auslese der Mütter, die...vorgeschlagen werden sollen", p. 346.

3. Schlesinger, op. cit., pp. 371-72.

4. BA, NSD17/RAK, June 1939, "Ehrenkreuz für kinderreiche deutsche Mütter", p. 3.

addition to enhancing the national esteem for mothers in a demonstrable way. And certainly Himmler saw this kind of activity as both valuable and right. In August 1940 he told Kersten, his masseur:

"After the war we'll have an entirely new system of honours and titles.... The Mothers' Cross is the best of all; one day it'll be the greatest honour in Greater Germany. Sentries will have to present arms to a woman with the Mothers' Cross in gold.... You'll find that a delegation of women with the Mothers' Cross will have precedence on parade over the Führer's bodyguard - and just consider the effect of that!"¹

Part of the motive for all this was, of course, the immediate need in war time to raise the spirits of German women when they had a husband or son at the front, in danger of losing his life. As he awarded a new batch of Honour Crosses in October 1939, Hess extolled the mothers, thanking them for giving Germany their children, paying special tribute to those who were mourning the death of a son in the field. His purpose was, however, to strengthen their will to accept whatever the Government might demand of them in the future, and it was to this end that his flattery and encouragement were primarily directed².

The measure of the success of all the encouragement and incentives given to promote procreation was to be found in the trend in the birth rate after 1933. At first, certainly, it seemed encouraging, with apparent endorsement of Nazi policies as early as possible, in 1934: the nadir of 59 live births per 1,000 women of child-bearing age in 1933 was followed by a dramatic rise to a

1. Felix Kersten, The Kersten Memoirs 1940-1945, London, 1956, p. 54.

2. BA, op. cit., October 1939, Rudolf Hess, "Das Mutterkreuz ist das Ehrenzeichen der Heimatfront der deutschen Frauen", p. 4.

figure of 73 in 1934 and 77 in each of the following three years, and in 1938-40 the figures were as high as 81, 85 and 84, respectively¹. That this upward trend was achieved by persuading married couples to procreate is illustrated by the continuing decline in the incidence of illegitimate births, in the years 1933-39, at any rate². But the rise in the birth rate was, if encouraging, much less spectacular than the Nazis had hoped to achieve, and than their propaganda boasted. Indeed, in comparison with the abnormally low birth rate of the late 1920s and early 1930s the years after 1933 showed a marked improvement; but they failed to match even the 1922 figure of 90 births per 1,000 women of child-bearing age, far less the 1910/11 rate of 128 which, coming at a time when the birth rate had already been steadily falling, must have been the minimum the Nazis hoped to achieve³. No doubt the imbalance between the sexes in the age-group most likely to provide parents contributed to the failure to achieve a better result; but with an increase in the marriage rate after 1933 it seems as if couples were deliberately choosing to have small families⁴.

Indeed the 1934-39 birth rate showed a marked improvement over that for the years 1929-33; but the comparison between these two periods - which the Nazis liked to make - is hardly valid, given the economic recession in 1928 followed by the effects of the depression

1. Figures from St.J.: 1932, p. 29; 1938, p. 47; 1941/42, p. 77.

2. This will be discussed in section D of this chapter.

3. Figures from St.J., 1933, p. 32.

4. The marriage rate rose from 7.9 marriages per 1,000 of the population in 1932 to 9.7 in 1933 and 11.2 in 1934. From 1935-38 it fluctuated between 9.1 and 9.7, again reaching 11.2 in 1939. Figures from St.J.: 1934, p. 27; 1937, p. 37; 1939/40, p. 42; 1941/42, p. 66.

from 1929. It is clear that the political stability which the Nazis brought, in spite of the repression, and the economic revival in the 1930s, although there was not actual prosperity, were factors which created a climate in which potential parents felt more secure, and therefore more inclined to bring children into the world. But the continued use of contraceptives and the continuing resort to abortion during the 1930s¹ suggests that the encouragement and the incentives were not sufficient to persuade people to have several children. Women had increasingly become accustomed to being able to choose the size of their family, and were, on the whole, not convinced by propaganda designed to portray a lifetime devoted to child-bearing and rearing - probably covering the life of a woman from twenty to fifty-five, or from twenty-five to sixty - as idyllic. The discovery by women before the war, intensified by experience after it, that the female of the species, too, could have aspirations outside the home and family, could not be reversed. Even if women were not obliged to work and did not want to work after marriage and the birth of children, the sole alternative was not bringing up a large family, but rather having few children in a short space of time and enjoying a more independent social life outside the home, and more leisure generally².

1. This will be discussed in section C of this chapter.

2. Hermann Ahrens, "Untersuchungen zur Soziologie der Familie in systematischer Absicht", doctoral dissertation for Rostock University, 1931, pp. 88-97.

B. Marriage and Divorce

The Great War and its losses brought about a deep change in the social and economic position of women, which had a profound effect on the marriage relationship. There were other factors, too: the inflation, the greater employment of women, the liberal atmosphere which had led, in the first flush of enthusiasm, to licence, all had an impact on the attitudes with which people entered marriage, and made the provisions of the Civil Code look really out of date. Indeed, by no means everyone was persuaded that the new values were right; Schwabach wrote about the emancipated woman, but emphasised that this term was relevant only "in the context of middle-class society", with little meaning for working-class women¹. But if the "new morality", vividly described by Stefan Zweig², touched only a small minority of the population, it was nevertheless important because of the reactions it generated. The experimenting with the marriage relationship, for example with trial marriage and companionate marriage, the higher rate of divorce in the post-war than in the pre-war years³, and the greater emphasis on sexual satisfaction for both

1. E. E. Schwabach, Revolutionierung der Frau, Leipzig, 1928, p. 132.

2. Stefan Zweig, The World of Yesterday, London, 1943, pp. 238-39.

3. The following table illustrates this point:

Year	No. of divorces	No. per 100,000 inhabitants
1913	17,835	26.6
1920	36,542	59.1
1923	33,939	55.0
1929	39,424	61.6
1932	42,202	65.0

Figures from St.J.: 1924/25, p. 51; 1926, p. 37; 1934, p. 50.

partners, caused uneasiness among moderate feminists like Katharina von Kardorff¹, while giving rise to nothing short of alarm in both Churches and among the basically conservative majority in the middle class.

By 1930 many different groups believed marriage and family life to be in crisis. The conservatives saw them as under fire from the permissive society of the Republic; the Communists and radical feminists regarded the bourgeois conception of marriage as irreconcilable with both reality and social justice; the Nazis claimed that the "system" was destroying marriage and the family unit². A more sober writer came firmly to the conclusion that the family as an institution was perfectly sound, although many families were struggling for existence in the depression³. In spite of the imbalance between the sexes, with war casualties depriving many young women of a partner, the marriage rate in the later 1920s was actually slightly higher than it had been just before the war, so that marriage seemed as popular as ever, even in the worst years of the depression⁴.

In spite of the changes which had taken place in the position of women in and after the Great War, the legal basis of marriage described

1. BA, Nachlass Katharina von Kardorff, no. 34a, "Papst contra Frau?", 1931, p. 92.
2. Käthe Braun-Prager, review of Rosa Mayreder, Die Krisis der Ehe, FiS, November 1929, p. 12.
Karl Fiehler, "Sozialgesetzgebung", Nationalsozialistisches Jahrbuch, 1927, pp. 122-23.
3. Anneliese Kasten, "Frau, Familie, Staat", AfFr, 1932, no. 4, p. 280.
4. In each of the last few years before the Great War there had been about 7.7 marriages per 1,000 of the population; in the years 1927-31 a rate of 8 or 9 was consistently maintained, and even in 1932 the figure was 7.9. Figures from St.J.: 1920, p. 28; 1930, p. 30; 1932, p. 24; 1936, p. 37.

in the Civil Code remained unaltered. Article 119 of the Weimar Constitution, which recognised that it should be brought up to date, remained a dead letter, in spite of resolutions that it should be implemented¹. At a time when marriage was felt by many to be on the defensive, it is hardly surprising that there was reluctance to alter its traditional forms. Agitation for reform was carried on chiefly by the radical feminists; but it was Marie-Elisabeth Lüders, a conservative in many respects, who sponsored a rather radical proposal for a change in the law of divorce as outlined in the Civil Code. There, the sexes were set on an equal footing, and various grounds for divorce, including adultery, bigamy, insanity and the rather vague category of "cruelty", were specified². Now, in the 1920s, Marie-Elisabeth Lüders represented those who believed that the concept of "guilt" associated with these grounds should be abolished, and the "irretrievable breakdown" of a marriage made the sole ground for divorce³. But this, like other proposals for amendments to the Civil Code, came to nothing; in marriage, at any rate, the man retained the rights of decision and authority delegated to him in 1896 until, in the Federal Republic, a new declaration of intent in the Basic Law was given substance by the Equal Rights Law of 18 June, 1957⁴.

1. W. Knorr, "Die Frau im Recht", FiS, October, 1931, pp. 5-7.

2. Greiff, op. cit., pp. 824-39. See also Julius Hirschfeld, "The Law of Divorce in England and Germany", Law Quarterly Review, 1897, pp. 396-405.

3. Puckett, op. cit., pp. 265-66.

4. Karl Larenz, "Einführung", Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch, Munich, 1970, p. 19.

The Nazis claimed to want to promote marriage and maintain the family, and it was to be expected that they would not aim to change the relative legal positions of men and women within them. But the encouragement they gave applied strictly to those whom they regarded as valuable citizens, from the points of view of race, heredity, health and politics. Hans Frank expressed his party's view thus: "There is no area of State policy which does not have its foundations in the realm of the family"¹. This was what was felt to justify the intervention of the State in the marriage relationship: "marriage is not merely a private matter, but one which directly affects the fate of a nation at its very roots", was how a female spokeswoman put it². Here, then, is the motive behind a number of measures instituted by the Government which were euphemistically termed "laws for the protection of marriage"³. The first priority was to prevent marriages taking place between "Aryan" Germans and non-"Aryans", especially Jews. Not everyone went as far as Hans Schemm, who claimed to have found scientific backing for the theory of Julius Streicher that intercourse with a Jew would poison the blood of an "Aryan" woman, so that she would not be able to bear "Aryan" children⁴. But the Nuremberg Laws of September 1935 forbade not only the marriage of an "Aryan" with a Jew, but also sexual

1. BA, R61/172, Hans Frank's speech to the Academy of German Law's Family Law Committee, December 1935 (exact date not given).

2. Else Vorwerck, "Gedanken über die Ehe im nationalsozialistischen Staat", NS-Frauenbuch, Munich, 1934, p. 146.

3. BA, loc. cit.

4. Report in Fränkische Tageszeitung, 30 January, 1935.

intercourse between them¹. This opened the way for other measures, and for a general reappraisal of both the marriage and divorce laws, with a view to reforming them².

Heredity was felt to be as vital a factor as race, and so the "Marriage Health Law" was passed in October 1935 with the purpose of actually prohibiting a person from marrying under certain circumstances. These included illness which might affect either a potential spouse or any offspring; the illness could be physical, mental, or some other described in the "Law for the Prevention of Hereditarily Diseased Offspring" of July 1933. To ensure that the law was enforced, an engaged couple was obliged in future to obtain a certificate from the local health office affirming that both were, by the definition of the law, fit for marriage³. This involved a medical examination, whose certification had only six months' validity, so that if the marriage was delayed beyond that time a further examination was required⁴. Marriages contracted abroad in order to circumvent the law would be invalid, and the contracting of a marriage without a certificate was punishable with imprisonment for not less than three months, although the penalty would be imposed only if the marriage was declared null and void as the result of an eventual examination⁵.

1. "Reichsbürgergesetz" and "Gesetz zum Schutze des deutschen Blutes und der deutschen Ehre", RGB, 1935 I, 15 September, 1935, pp. 1146-47.
2. "Vorschläge zur Eherechtsreform", report in FZ, 12 January, 1935.
3. "Gesetz zum Schutze der Gesundheit des deutschen Volkes (Ehegesundheitsgesetz)", RGB, 1935 I, 18 October, 1935, p. 1246.
4. "1. DVO zur Durchführung des Ehegesundheitsgesetz", RGB, 1935 I, 29 November, 1935, pp. 1419-20.
5. "Eheverbote in gewissen Fällen", VB, 20 October, 1935.

It became clear that the examination did not, however, always reveal hereditary defects, even when an SS doctor, trained in understanding the genealogical tables which applicants for marriage had to provide, carefully scrutinised the family history. Deep investigation showed that men and women whose forebears had suffered from such objectionable diseases as tuberculosis, alcoholism and even insanity were slipping through the examination, because the SS doctor, particularly in the cities, was not familiar with the applicants' case and family history¹. The Party's Racial Policy Office launched a campaign to draw attention to its "Ten Commandments for Choosing a Spouse", to try to alert the "racially and hereditarily healthy" to the dangers of choosing a partner who was not "equally valuable"; having outlined the qualifications required in this respect, the Commandments stipulated another, which would not necessarily be compatible with them - "marry only for love!"². The motive here was the same as ever: a loving couple would be more likely to provide a stable home, and, so it was thought, many children.

Not only were the Nazis anxious to prevent marriages which they did not feel to be in the interests of the State from taking place; they were also concerned to facilitate the dissolution of "unsuitable" marriages which had already been contracted. Hans Frank made it clear that his party did not take divorce lightly; equally, he was at pains to point out that it could not support a view which

1. IfZ, MA 387, frames 5183-85, "Ausbildungsbrief Nr. 3 des SS-Sanitätsamtes", 31 May, 1937.

2. IfZ, MA 47, frames 8005272-73, "Zehn Leitsätze für die Gattenwahl", Rassenpolitisches Amt, Gau Baden, reproduction of an article of June 1937 in the Festschrift für das R.d.K.

forbade the dissolution of a marriage which had patently broken down. The new divorce law, over whose constitution he was presiding, would be designed to reflect these views, he said¹. The present law was felt to be in such urgent need of reform that the Family Law Committee of the Academy of German Law had decided at its opening meeting in Munich in March 1934 to devote its energies towards a reframing of the divorce law, as its first priority². The most difficult question here was whether guilt should continue to be apportioned to one or both parties in a divorce. The Committee was of the opinion that this practice sometimes created difficulties in the achieving of a divorce, even where the maintenance of the marriage was neither desired by the two partners nor to the benefit of the community³. The chief consideration here was that an estranged couple was unlikely to contribute to the birth-rate, while the dissolution of their marriage would enable each to enter into a new and more fruitful partnership⁴.

The result of the exertions of the Family Law Committee was the Marriage Law of 1938, which incorporated the new divorce law. The existing restrictions on marriage were reiterated and augmented in minor matters; but the most interesting and sweeping provisions related

1. BA, R61/172, loc. cit.

2. BA, R61/173, Academy of German Law, "Vorschlag zur Neugestaltung des Deutschen Ehescheidungsrechtes", August 1935.

3. BA, R61/174, Academy of German Law, Family Law Committee, "Stellungnahme betreffend Neugestaltung des deutschen Ehescheidungsrechtes", 29 September, 1936.

4. Report in WuS, 1939, no. 23, p. 755.

to divorce. The clauses of the Civil Code concerning it were revoked and replaced by a new definition of grounds for divorce. These included the formalising of a practice already begun, by which a partner might sue for divorce if his or her spouse refused, without good cause, to allow the begetting or conceiving of offspring; in addition, a divorce might be granted if either partner resorted to illegal means to try to prevent a birth - a clear reference to abortion¹. As early as December 1935, it had been reported that a county court had dissolved a marriage and named the wife as the guilty party because she had refused to have children. The explanation given was that she was directly contravening the current view of the nature of marriage². The 1938 law was indeed intended to spell out the Nazi view of the nature of marriage, which, as in this case, included an indication of what constituted an unacceptable marriage.

Adultery remained a ground for divorce; and premature infertility became one, provided that there were no "hereditarily healthy" children of the marriage. But the most interesting, and indeed revolutionary, provision was "paragraph 55", which stated that either partner might apply for a divorce if the couple had lived apart for three years and the marriage seemed to have broken down irretrievably³. This clause thus permitted the dissolution of a marriage without the apportioning of blame, and without the need for the existence - or manufacturing - of the traditional kind of "grounds", as specified in the Civil Code. That this was seen chiefly as a means

1. "Gesetz zur Vereinheitlichung des Rechts der Eheschliessung und der Ehescheidung im Lande Österreich und im übrigen Reichsgebiet", RGB, 1938 I, vol. 2, 6 July, 1938, pp. 807-22.

2. Report in FZ, 1 December, 1935.

3. RGB, op. cit., pp. 812-13.

of enabling citizens to enter a new union, which would be more likely to provide the nation with children, does not detract from the fact that it permitted the dissolution of an irreparable marriage, in a manner which was at last regarded as humane and sensible in England and Wales (but not in Scotland) in 1969¹.

Ironically, this new provision was very similar to what the Women's Movement had been campaigning for in the 1920s, but for rather different motives; then, the happiness of the individual was seen as a good reason for trying to revise the law². In Nazi Germany, however, it was made clear that this policy was designed not so much to accommodate the private individual as to allow the interests of the nation to take precedence, by upholding "valuable" marriages and allowing the dissolution of those which had no value for the community³. But individuals did benefit: Erich Hilgenfeldt, leader of the NSV, had his marriage dissolved in 1940, under "paragraph 55", in order to remarry; his first marriage had long since broken down, his wife and he having separated in 1932 or 1933⁴.

The new divorce law was demonstrably popular among the German people: in 1939, the first full year of the law's operation, divorces reached the unprecedented height of almost 62,000, 21.6% of which were granted under "paragraph 55". The official view, which seems reasonable, was that a substantial number of people whose marriage had indeed broken down, but who had no grounds for divorce under the Civil

1. J. L. Barton, "Questions on the Divorce Reform Act of 1969", Law Quarterly Review, 1970, p. 348.

2. Puckett, loc. cit.

3. Report in WuS, loc. cit.

4. BDC, SS file on Erich Hilgenfeldt. Hilgenfeldt's association with the Nazi women's organisation will be discussed in Chapter 6.

Code, at once took advantage of this new provision; certainly, 50% of the divorces granted under "paragraph 55" had been contracted twenty or more years earlier. In 1940 the number of divorces dropped to below 50,000, but still 15.5% were granted under "paragraph 55", and almost half of these were marriages of long duration¹. Clearly, the new measure would continue to relieve estranged couples of the legal ties of a marriage which had in reality ceased to exist. And, more important from the Government's point of view, it would also permit the regularising of relationships already entered into by nominally married persons, and therefore the legitimising of offspring of the new union.

If "paragraph 55" seemed reasonable to many, there was doubt about another aspect of the new divorce law, that relating to the support of a divorced spouse. It was laid down that the "guilty" husband, in cases where guilt still applied, must support his former wife in the manner to which she had been accustomed, if she did not have sufficient income from property and could not reasonably be expected to earn her own living; equally, the "guilty" wife was obliged to pay maintenance to her former husband if he was unable to support himself. This was, in fact, almost an exact repetition of a paragraph in the Civil Code². But the 1938 law went on to add that the new responsibilities of the partner liable to pay maintenance - if he entered a new marriage, especially - were to be taken into consideration when the amount of alimony was settled³.

1. Report in WuS, 1942, no. 1, pp. 22-23.

2. Greiff, op. cit., p. 839.

3. RGB, op. cit., pp. 814-15.

This broad definition of responsibility led to demands for further clarification, and in 1939 Dr. Gürtner, the Minister of Justice, felt obliged to try to explain it. It was not intended - as some people claimed - he said, that a man declared "guilty" would no longer be required to support his former wife, simply because she was capable of working; after all, she might have children to look after. But beyond this all the Minister would say was that the condition of the labour market could influence a divorced wife's duty to take a job¹. Again, the needs of the State were to have full priority: by 1939 Germany needed to tap every available source of labour; and for pro-natalist reasons men were to be relieved of the need to pay maintenance, if possible, so that they would be enabled to enter a new marriage and start a new family.

Nazi legislation affecting marriage and divorce led in the later 1930s to growing friction between the regime and the Catholic Church. The Vatican was quick to register its disapproval of the 1938 law with the German Ambassador², and, on the other side, Himmler repeatedly attacked the Church for its narrow-minded view of marriage and morality³. In reports by his secret service agents the Catholic Church was habitually referred to under the heading "opponents"⁴. Certainly, priests had spoken out against what they saw as a

1. "Der Unterhalt geschiedener Frauen", FZ, 14 May, 1939.

2. BA, R43II/1523a, letter from the Foreign Office to Lammers, Kerrl, Gürtner et al., 31 July, 1938.

3. IfZ, MA 387, frame 5194, "Verein 'Lebensborn'e.V.", 31 May, 1937.

Kersten, op. cit., pp. 154-56, 176-77.

4. Heinz Boberach (ed.), Meldungen aus dem Reich, Munich, 1968, e.g. pp. 34, 47, 61, 87.

relaxing of moral standards, and early in 1940 the Catholic bishops in Germany criticised the relaxation of the lengthy procedure which had been developed to ensure that only the "suitable" married, on the grounds that people ought to spend time seriously considering the nature of marriage and preparing themselves for it¹. To try to abolish the still-persisting influence of the Churches in family affairs, an enthusiastic Party worker put forward proposals for a compulsory Nazi marriage service², which would also have the effect of giving the State even closer control over this vital area.

But in war-time some aspects of close control were to be sacrificed, if only on a temporary basis. At the end of August, with war imminent, a law was passed which removed the requirement that an intending couple submit to a medical examination to ascertain whether they were fit to marry³. This would facilitate marriage - and, it was hoped, procreation - by enabling conscripts to marry before going to the front, whereas the provisions of the Marriage Health Law would have forced many to wait, perhaps indefinitely. But the lifting of restrictions was found to be having undesirable side-effects, with "hereditarily unsound" persons taking advantage of the quicker procedure⁴. Himmler congratulated himself early in 1940 on the success of his "population propaganda" which, he claimed, was

1. BA, R58/147, MadR, 15 January, 1940, "Gegner: Katholische Hirtenbrief über die Ehe".
2. BA, NS15/15, cutting from FZ, 20 August, 1939, "Die Form der Trauung", by Gauamtsleiter Staatsrat Dr. Förg (Augsburg).
3. "Verordnung zur Durchführung des Gesetzes zur Verhütung erbkranken Nachwuchses und des Ehegesundheitsgesetzes", RGB, 1939 I, 31 August, 1939, p. 1561.
4. IfZ, MA 441/1, frame 2-750525, MadR, 27 December, 1939.

leading to the contracting of large numbers of marriages in war-time¹. But how many of those marrying after August 1939 would have married in previous years if the new "race and heredity" legislation had not been in force was something he did not consider. Although the extent of this can only be surmised, it is reasonable to suppose that a backlog of unregistered marriages built up in the later 1930s which would be regularised at the first opportunity. In this area, as with the birth rate and birth control, the Nazis were attempting the near impossible, by trying to exert a decisive and overwhelming influence in the area most difficult to control - and where attempts at control are least defensible - namely the private life of the individual citizen.

C. Abortion and Contraception

Within the entire area of marriage, the family and the birth rate no question raised such passions nor was so violently contested as that of the law concerning abortion. Before the Great War the radical feminists had campaigned for the repeal of the harsh penalties laid down in the Criminal Code of the Empire for anyone attempting to procure or perform an abortion². The SPD, too, had called for reform, and this remained party policy after the war³. Outflanking the SPD, and following the policy of Soviet Russia, where abortion had been legalised⁴, the KPD demanded that there be no

1. BA, R58/147, MadR, 17 January, 1940.

2. Evans, op. cit., pp. 192-221, describes the radicals' campaign and the liberal feminists' opposition to it.

3. Bolte and Kappe, loc. cit.

4. Fannina Halle, Woman in Soviet Russia, London, 1933, pp. 38-39.

restriction whatever in Germany, since it was a woman's right to decide whether and when she would have children. The KPD bitterly attacked the SPD for failing to legalise abortion while it was in government, but at the same time implicitly pointed to the chief reason for this failure by attacking the Churches and the Centre Party for their implacable opposition to toleration of abortion¹. Indeed the SPD had soft-pedalled its policy of favouring a radical reform of the law, in its new-found respectability as a party of government; but given the pathological terror of its coalition partner, the Centre Party, of any relaxing of morals - and of the legalisation of abortion above all² - this attitude was a prudent one if reform in any area was to be achieved.

It is, in fact, remarkable that, given the Centre Party's implacable opposition to the legalisation of abortion, and its consistent tenure of office, the law was reformed in May 1926, with the Draconian Imperial penalties modified so that they bore less heavily on the woman seeking or undergoing an abortion, while still allowing the severe punishment of anyone discovered performing

1. "Richtlinien der KPD zur Frage der Geburtenregelung", document in AfB, 1931, pp. 60-61.

BA, R58/, RMdI/NsdL, "Private Wohlfahrt und Reformismus", Rote Wohlfahrt publication, 21 September, 1932, p. 251.

BA, R58/(fol. 1), RMdI/NsdL, "Politische Resolution beschlossen auf dem Reichskultur-Kongress, Leipzig, 14. und 15.3.1931", 13 April, 1931.

2. Klaus Epstein, "The Zentrum Party in the Weimar Republic" (review article of Rudolf Morsey, Die deutsche Zentrumspartei 1917-1923, Düsseldorf, 1966), Journal of Modern History, 1967, p. 162.

abortions for payment¹. And in 1927, as the result of a test case, there was for the first time toleration of abortion on medical grounds where, especially, the health or life of the woman would be endangered if the pregnancy were allowed to run its course². The compromise on abortion resulting from these decisions could go some way towards satisfying the reformers without driving the Churches, especially, into hysteria; but it was seen by both the KPD and the radical feminists as a feeble and inadequate outcome.

Particularly in the depression years the KPD waged a massive campaign against "paragraph 218", chiefly through its auxiliary group the ARSO (Association of Social Policy Organisations), which operated both through its own national committee for population policy and in conjunction with affiliated groups working for sexual reform, for example the League for the Protection of Mothers and the Workers' Union for Birth Control³. There was, in addition, the Freethinkers' Society, another KPD auxiliary, whose main purpose was to combat the influence of the Churches, which were regarded as the chief defenders of "paragraph 218". This law was seen as an integral part of the enslavement of women within the capitalist system, of which

1. Bolte and Kappe, loc. cit.

Hans Harmsen, "Notes on Abortion and Birth-Control in Germany", Population Studies, 1949-50, p. 402. Paragraphs 219 and 220 of the Criminal Code were repealed, leaving an altered paragraph 218, which became the symbol as well as the reality of what those in favour of legalising abortion opposed.

2. Bolte and Kappe, loc. cit.

"Eugenische Indikation und Paragraph 218", FZ, 23 January, 1935.

3. BA, R58/1148, RMAI/NsdL, 19 December, 1932, "Arso".

the Churches were, rightly, held to be staunch supporters¹. The KPD therefore tried to attract women to the working-class side in the class war by publicising its campaign against the abortion law, since, as the Central Information Office of the Reich Ministry of the Interior reported,

"The sexual organisations affiliated to the ARSO, like all fringe groups of the KPD, have as their primary aim the recruiting and educating of new fighters for the proletarian revolution by exploiting their particular grievance or distress"².

The propaganda material of the KPD and the ARSO certainly gave the impression that more or less all working-class women were suffering untold distress as a result of the remaining restrictions on abortion³. Certainly, with anything between half a million and a million abortions performed in Germany annually⁴ the issue was one of national importance, the more so since the result of driving desperate women, more of them married than single, into the hands of back-street abortionists was that there were perhaps as many as

1. BA, R58/1146, RMdI/NsdL, n.d. ?April 1932.

2. BA, R58/1148, loc. cit.

3. Numerous examples of such propaganda material may be found in the BA, R58 files, e.g., R58/, RMdI/NsdL, "Proklamation zur kulturellen Befreiung des werktätigen Volkes", Kampfbereit, December 1931, p. 14, and R58/1148, RMdI/NsdL, 19 December, 1932, "Arso".

4. The estimates vary: D.V. Glass stated that 800,000 to 1 million was the most common estimate for the years after 1918 (Population Policies and Movements, London, 1940, p. 279); Dr. Clara Bender, in Archiv für Frauenkunde, 1932, p. 282, estimates an annual figure of $\frac{1}{2}$ million to 1 million; O. Jean Brandes, "The Effect of the War on the German family", Social Forces, 1950/51, p. 166, n.3, reports the 1928 Congress of German Physicians at Eisenach as estimating that there were 500,000-800,000 abortions each year.

100,000 cases of serious illness each year directly caused by abortion techniques¹. And there was the additional hazard of prosecution. Die Frau im Staat, calling for the abolition of "paragraph 218", reported in autumn 1930 the case of a miner's wife who had been sentenced to three years' imprisonment for having performed abortions, although it was established that in 140 cases she had neither taken any payment nor once caused injury or illness². She may well have been exceptional in not charging her clients; on the whole, abortions cost money, and a Breslau woman doctor went as far as to say in 1932 that the availability of abortion had become "purely a matter of cash"³.

The tenacity and enthusiasm with which the Communists and radical feminists campaigned for "abortion on demand" did not mean that they were actually in favour of abortion. Both groups rather regarded it as a necessary evil, as an emergency measure which was less evil than forcing a woman to bring into the world a child who was not wanted and who probably could not be cared for adequately. The better solution, they felt, was an end to the existing restrictions

1. Again, estimates vary: a book reviewer in FiS, May 1929, p. 11, puts the figure at somewhere between 61,000 and 100,000; Clara Bender, loc. cit., states that abortions led to 4,000-5,000 deaths and at least 100,000 cases of serious illness each year. It is possible that a greater resort to abortion during the depression years partly explains this discrepancy.
2. "Unsere Buchstaben-Justiz", FiS, September/October 1930, pp. 16-17.
3. Clara Bender, loc. cit.

on the spread of contraceptive advice¹. In post-war Germany this issue was contested almost as fiercely as was that of abortion law reform. Although birth-control organisations existed freely, some being commercial undertakings and some run on a charitable basis by voluntary organisations, while some of the sickness insurance funds provided contraceptive advice as part of their service², there was a legal ban on the public advertisement of contraceptives, so that those most in need of help had only a limited chance of learning that it was available. To combat this, the KPD formed another auxiliary group alongside the ARSO, which they called the AMSO (Association of Marxist Social Workers), to agitate for freely available contraceptive advice. The main complaint of the AMSO was that the law was invoked only against the proletarian organisations for sexual reform, and in order to show its absurdity, the AMSO was, in January 1933, seriously considering bringing a complaint against the Berlin Police Sports Union's magazine, which habitually carried full and frank advertisements for contraceptives, and which had nevertheless not been prosecuted³.

If the KPD and the radical feminists were in a minority in their open and wholehearted campaigns for the legalisation of abortion, they were in much larger company when it came to promoting the spread

1. "Richtlinien der KPD zur Frage der Geburtenregelung", document in AfB, 1931, pp. 57-59.

BA, R58/, propaganda leaflet of ?early January, 1933, gives the KPD slogan as "Nicht abtreiben, sondern verhüten!"

Auguste Kirchhoff, "Siebenter internationaler Kongress für Geburtenregelung", FiS, November 1930, p. 5.

2. Glass, op. cit., pp. 276-77.

3. BA, R58/336, RMdI/NsdL, 6 January, 1933.

of contraceptive advice and general sexual enlightenment. There had already been birth-control organisations before the war, and their number increased very considerably after it. The most noticeable expansion was among those groups appealing to the working class, and in July 1928 a number of these joined together in the National Association for Birth Control and Sexual Hygiene. This was a non-profit-making organisation with 12,000 members; but although it addressed itself to working-class women and girls in the language of the political left, it deliberately kept itself politically neutral, so as to appeal to as wide a clientèle as possible. Activity in the field of birth control intensified greatly in the late 1920s and early 1930s, particularly once the economic depression made freedom from an unwanted pregnancy an even greater need for many women. In 1930, to meet the needs of the German capital, three prominent doctors founded the first marriage advisory centre in Berlin, and their example was followed elsewhere¹. Finally, in January 1931 representatives of the most important birth-control groups founded the German Central Office for Birth Control, as a non-political organisation to facilitate the exchange of information among the various groups, and to look at sexual matters in their social, legal, eugenic and ethical context; it was also intended to make contact with birth-control groups abroad².

1. Hans Lehfeldt, "Die Laienorganisationen für Geburtenregelung", AfB, 1932, pp. 62-68.

2. Report in AfB, 1931, p. 84.

The Churches were rightly seen by socialists, radicals and progressives as the chief bastions of resistance to the legalisation of abortion and the spread of contraceptive advice. The Evangelical Church was decisively in favour of large families and opposed to "any limiting of births on grounds of selfishness, convenience or pleasure"¹; it regretted that the problems of the economic depression were having a destructive effect on family life in this context². The attitude of the Roman Catholic Church was summed up in the Papal Encyclical "Casti Conubii" of 1930, in response to a situation which had, from the Church's point of view, rapidly deteriorated during the 1920s. Abortion was anathema to Catholics, and on the question of contraception the Pope's words were, as Campbell says, "forceful and unambiguous". This "shameful and intrinsically immoral...criminal abuse" was to be stamped out by a concerted campaign by Catholics everywhere³. To counter the advisory centres established by the groups in favour of birth control both Churches set up their own "Marriage Advisory Centres", which merely gave clients the Christian view of marriage and sexual life, with no medical or physiological advice whatsoever⁴.

1. The wording here is strikingly similar to that of a resolution adopted by the Anglican Church at the Lambeth Conference in 1930: "The Conference records its strong condemnation of the use of any methods of conception control from motives of selfishness, luxury, or mere convenience". Quoted in Flann Campbell, "Birth Control and the Christian Churches", Populations Studies, 1960, p. 136.
2. "Aufruf des Deutschen Evangelischen Kirchenausschuss vom 25. Mai 1932", document in AfB, 1932, pp. 95-96.
3. Campbell, op. cit., p. 138.
4. Max Hodann, History of Modern Morals, London, 1937, pp. 167-68.

The Churches were not the only pro-natalist groups, however. The concern about the declining birth rate of the immediately pre-war and then the war years had led to the founding of organisations to promote the idea that large families were not only a national necessity but positively desirable in themselves. In 1923 these groups amalgamated into the Reichsbund der Kinderreichen Deutschlands zum Schutz der Familie (RdK), with its headquarters in Berlin. It was estimated that a meeting of the association in 1927 in Bochum attracted some 5,000 participants¹; but the pro-natalists did not command the organised support enjoyed by their opponents in the birth-control groups. These were said to have 70,000 members by 1931 in the lay organisations, over and above those run by the medical profession². And, certainly, the population as a whole demonstrated its preference, as the birth rate continued to decline. No doubt the depression had a considerable effect on people's desire for children; but if it was a matter of choice then it seems that the real reason for the trend as a whole was the much more widespread use of contraceptives as a result of the greater activity of the birth-control organisations in the later 1920s and early 1930s, and their greater success than the pro-natalist groups.

This could be true only in a political climate which tolerated and encouraged freedom of choice, freedom of association. The

1. David V. Glass, Population Policies and Movements, London, 1940, pp. 272-74.

2. Report in AfB, 1931, p. 84.

Communists may well have felt that they were discriminated against in the Weimar Republic, and indeed the confidential reports made on Communist activities under the last governments of the Republic suggest a degree of surveillance which many liberals would no doubt have thought offensive in a democracy¹. The remnants of democracy and freedom were, however, eliminated in the early months of 1933, after the Nazi take-over, and the views of the Nazi Party on procreation, as on other subjects, became national policy. Hitler had written, "it must be considered as reprehensible conduct to refrain from giving healthy children to the nation", which suggested that abortion would be stamped out, contraceptives banned, and the birth-control organisations declared illegal. On the other hand, Nazi theories about race and heredity meant that in certain cases methods of birth control would be positively encouraged. Again, Hitler had provided the guidelines: "...there is only one infamy, namely for parents that are ill or show hereditary defects to bring children into the world"². To ensure that the fittest survived, only the fit should be allowed to procreate. For the first time, then, there was to be a State-directed population policy, with coercion and compulsion as the corollary of the incentives mentioned earlier.

It was as typical of the Nazis to introduce their State-directed policy as it had been of the Weimar governments to shun such a course. But what was involved in the closing down of birth-control centres was not merely the new regime's population policy,

1. The records of these reports are to be found in the BA, R58 files.

2. Adolf Hitler, Mein Kampf, Munich, 1936, p. 338.

but also its political aims, for a number of the organisations providing contraceptive advice and distributing propaganda about birth control were, of course, run by the KPD. The "Law for the Protection of the People and the State", passed on 28 February, 1933, was used by police authorities in Dortmund, Hamburg and Liegnitz, for example, to ban birth-control organisations, on the grounds of their association with "Marxist groups", while in the state of Thuringia every single birth-control organisation was compulsorily dissolved, on the same pretext¹. Other groups survived longer, but were forced to conduct their activities in the greatest secrecy, which was bound to be counterproductive when their entire campaign depended on the spreading of propaganda. Even so, assiduous police activity often resulted in the detection of groups which had tried to disguise their purpose. In April 1933 it was reported that the organisation with the acceptable name of the League for the Protection of Mothers was indeed a welfare concern, but was, in addition, a front for illicit KPD meetings².

The League was also continuing to campaign, as effectively as possible under the circumstances, against "paragraph 218" and also against the prohibition of the birth-control organisations which, it claimed, was on the agenda for legislation, along with a measure to restrict the distribution of contraceptives to chemists; this last restriction would mean the end of free contraceptives and the putting of prices beyond the means of working-class women. Already,

1. "Verbot der Laienorganisationen für Geburtenregelung", AfB, 1933-34, p. 55.

2. BA, R58/, typewritten memo, 14 April, 1933.

as a sign of the new Government's earnest intent, the number of prosecutions for abortion was increasing. The League now called, desperately and belatedly, for a united front of all groups dedicated to sexual reform, to fight the menace of fascism and defend their organisations¹.

The League's fears were partly justified. Before the end of May 1933 a law was passed reintroducing paragraphs 219 and 220 of the Criminal Code in a new form, which specified a punishment of up to two years' imprisonment or a fine for anyone advertising or offering abortion facilities, unless there were permitted medical circumstances². To try to ensure that members of the medical profession would not use their position to perform abortions freely, a campaign was launched to detect and dismiss those felt to be suspect. In Berlin, on the day after the law was passed, the Mayor reported to one of his chiefs of police that certain persons, including some doctors, had been dismissed from the city's employment because of their connection with the "Red Welfare" organisation of the KPD. The AMSO was apparently managing to survive, although by now the authorities were keeping a close watch on its activities³. But it appears that, amazingly, a few of the birth control organisations managed to stay in existence; Hodann reported that in 1935 there were still Marxist groups

1. BA, R58/, "Kampf gegen das drohende Verbot der Sexualorganisationen!" Die Warte, ?March/April 1933 (covering letter, as above, dated 14 April, 1933).

2. "Gesetz zur Änderung strafrechtlicher Vorschriften", RGB, 1933 I, 26 May, 1933, p. 296.

3. BA, R58/, letter from the Mayor of Berlin to the head of a section of the Berlin police force, 27 May, 1933.

for sexual reform active in Germany, in spite of their being known to the Gestapo¹.

Meanwhile, it had become apparent that the new regime was prepared to tolerate and even approve abortion in certain cases. The Hereditary Health Court in Hamburg, in a test case in March 1934, gave a judgment which declared abortion on grounds of racial health to be a non-punishable act. Reporting this, the Frankfurter Zeitung commented that the Court was deliberately making a fundamental decision of principle which it expected to serve as a precedent. The "medical indication" had already been made a ground for performing an abortion legally, in 1927; now the Nazis had introduced the "eugenic indication", which permitted the termination of a pregnancy if the health of the nation was considered to be endangered by the birth of an "hereditarily unhealthy" child, on condition that the mother acquiesced². This was a logical corollary to the Sterilisation Law of 14 July, 1933, and the same definition of "hereditary health" applied, namely the absence of mental illness and of certain kinds of physical illness or disability which might conceivably be heritable. Alcoholism was regarded as an "hereditary risk" also³, since it was claimed that women who were alcoholics generally gave birth to children who were mentally or physically retarded, or who became delinquents or prostitutes; it was also believed that the wife of an alcoholic who did not herself suffer from the

1. Hodann, op. cit., pp. 165-66.

2. "Eugenische Indikation und Paragraph 218", FZ, 23 January, 1935.

3. "Gesetz zur Verhütung erbkranken Nachwuchses", RGB, 1933 I, 14 July, 1933, p. 529.

disease might bear maladjusted children¹.

The Frankfurter Zeitung guardedly observed that before 1933 the Nazis had campaigned vigorously, and with some success, against those who had tried to have social grounds such as indigence made a legal ground for abortion, and had given people to understand that they would never permit abortion for frivolous reasons if they came to power. Now, however, they were permitting the termination of a pregnancy - while the life was still unviable - where a legally-approved application for sterilisation had been made on eugenic grounds, again with the approval of the woman concerned. The paper could only hint at the apparent inconsistency here, while approving this step in the direction of allowing a woman more control over her reproductive capacity, if only in strictly limited circumstances². Professor D.V. Glass, hardly a reactionary and certainly not an admirer of the Nazis, also called this move "liberal"³, but this was before the Nazis' eugenics policies had been revealed in their full horror, during the war. An early sign of the direction these would later take came in 1938, when the announcement was made that Jews would not be liable to prosecution if they resorted to abortion, since this could only benefit the German people⁴. The same reasoning led Himmler to regard homosexuality as sabotage, and therefore to

1. Gertrud Kaetzel, Volksgift und Frauenpflichten, Munich, undated, pp. 4-10.

2. "Die Eugenische Indikation", FZ, 28 June, 1935.

3. Glass, op. cit., p. 283.

4. BA, NSD30/vorl. 1836, Informationsdienst..., March 1939, "Anwendung nur auf das deutsche Volk".

contemplate tolerating it in non-"Aryans" while meting out the most severe of penalties to homosexuals who were German citizens¹.

In general, however, the intention had been to eliminate abortion, so that "racially valuable" children were not lost to the nation in this way. But the tightening up of the law and the more rigorous prosecution of those performing and undergoing abortions by no means had the desired effect, as Himmler's staff was well aware². In May 1937, an SS Medical Information Office letter stated that the number of abortions taking place annually "must still, incredibly, be estimated as high", and that it must be reduced³. But in spite of the sanctions, the practice continued. Himmler's agents reported an increase in miscarriages in December 1939, which they attributed partly to the taking over of heavy work on the land by wives whose husbands had been called up, and partly to anxiety in women at the danger their husbands might be facing. But, in addition to this, they believed that some miscarriages were being induced deliberately. This was, they said, particularly noticeable in Danzig, where German troops had by this time been in occupation for the two or three months felt to be most likely to elapse between conception and the resort to abortion. But also in Karlsruhe a gynaecologist reported

1. Felix Kersten, The Kersten Memoirs, London, 1956, p. 57.

2. IfZ, MA 306, frame 593008, letter from Wangemann, on Himmler's staff, to Himmler, 7 February, 1938.

3. IfZ, MA 387, frames 5193-94, "Verein 'Lebensborn' e.V.", 31 May, 1937.

that almost every week he had to deal with miscarriages which showed all the signs of having been caused by abortion techniques¹.

The war made the matter of population growth seem even more urgent, with the need to make good the losses in the field, and, so Hess and Himmler believed, to ensure that each soldier did his patriotic duty by fathering a child before he went to the front². Thus, Himmler was deeply concerned when official statistics showed that there were still about 600,000 abortions being performed in Germany each year, a level comparable with that estimated for the years between 1918 and 1933³. The sanctions and the heavy pro-natalist propaganda used as instruments of Nazi policy seem, therefore, to have had little or no effect in reducing, far less in eliminating, the practice of abortion, although the penalty of imprisonment was freely imposed on offenders⁴. Trying to persuade the army to support the anti-abortion campaign vigorously, Himmler wrote to Keitel that the prevention of the 600,000 annual abortions could in twenty years be providing two hundred more regiments for the army in each succeeding year⁵. But at the same time it was still considered vital to prevent the birth of children who were deemed to be "unfit" by sanctioning abortion where at least one parent had an "hereditary defect", and where - so Frick believed - racial grounds made the

1. BA, R58/146, MadR, 13 December, 1939, "Zunahme der Fehlgeburten".

2. "Der Sieg der Frauen", Das Schwarze Korps, 4 January, 1940.

3. See note 2 on page 80.

4. BA, R43II/1286a, letter from the Hanover Chief of Police to the Reich Chancellery, 13 March, 1941.

5. IfZ, Fa 202, letter from Himmler to Keitel, undated, ?late July, 1940.

continuation of the pregnancy undesirable¹.

The Nazis claimed to have closed down the former marriage advisory centres, which had in fact had as their chief function the giving of contraceptive advice²; they replaced them with their own bureaux for giving positive encouragement and advice about pregnancy and child care³. Perhaps surprisingly, however, there were no formal decrees against the production and sale of contraceptives before the war broke out; this was no doubt largely because the condom was regarded as a protective against the spread of venereal disease as well as against conception, and it was one of the Nazis' constant preoccupations that venereal disease could lead to sterility. Lenz, one of the Party's most prominent population pundits, estimated that more than 100,000 children were lost annually as a result of venereal disease, quite apart from the infected children born to diseased parents⁴. But although the spread of venereal disease in the peculiar situation of the war - particularly among teenage girls who hung around railway stations soliciting among soldiers⁵ - was a source of deep concern, the Himmler Police Ordinance of January 1941 categorically banned the production and distribution of contraceptives. This was

1. IfZ, MA 47, letter from Frick to Reichsstatthalter, Land governments, health offices et al., 19 September, 1940.
2. F. K. Scheumann in AfFr, 1931-32, pp. 299-300.
3. Dr. Lippert, "Unterhaltszuschuss für erbgesunde Kinder", VB, 3 March, 1934.
4. August Mayer, Deutsche Mutter und deutscher Aufstieg, Munich, 1938, pp. 17-18.
5. IfZ, MA 441/1, frame 2-750184, BziL, 3 November, 1939.

part of a policy of repression in an atmosphere of growing hysteria about the desperate need for Germans to reproduce as the war took its toll of young lives. The final step in this policy was the introduction of the death penalty in 1943 for anyone found to have performed an abortion¹.

The chief result of Nazi attempts to stamp out abortion and at least limit contraception seems to have been to hinder the development of a liberal policy towards birth control in the Federal Republic; the Himmler Ordinance remained in force in most Länder until 1961, while the near-suppression of the former birth-control movement meant that a new campaign would have to start virtually from scratch, again in the face of strong opposition from the Churches². Once again, the legal barrier is "paragraph 218", the 1926 abortion law³. With regard to the Third Reich, it is clear that the Nazi aim of completely eliminating abortion among the "racially and hereditarily valuable", and of eliminating contraceptive practice as far as possible, was not realised. The measures the Nazis took were piecemeal, and the loop-holes they left seem unaccountable, in the light of

1. Bolte and Kappe, op. cit., p. 45.

Hans Harmsen, op. cit., p. 403, says that during the war the military authorities succeeded in exempting the condom from the Himmler Ordinance, to prevent the spread of venereal disease.

2. D.V. Glass, "Family Planning Programmes in Western Europe", Population Studies, 1966, p. 229.

Bolte and Kappe, op. cit., p. 46.

3. Hans Harmsen, op. cit., p. 402.

"Abtreibung: Massenmord oder Privatsache?", Der Spiegel, 21 May, 1973, pp. 38-58.

their obsession with the population issue. The basic reason must be that the German people, in this matter as in so many others, did not make an open demonstration of their opposition, but rather continued to follow their own desires quietly, in deep secrecy if necessary. Even with a huge army of spies and informers, the Nazis found that they could not watch all of the people all of the time; they were not even able to stamp out the last vestiges of organised birth-control groups, although they came close to it. The long history of birth control in Germany, with the widespread resort to abortion if contraception had been unavailable, or had failed, could not be eliminated from popular consciousness by a few laws and even a mass of propaganda, so that in this area the Nazi aim of creating a fully totalitarian state which controlled every aspect of the life of its people came to nothing, as it was bound to. Repression could achieve only the driving of these practices underground, where popular demand ensured that, somehow, they were continued.

D. The Unmarried Mother

The national emergency occasioned by the outbreak of the Great War gave rise to a decision of the Reichstag on 4 April, 1914, that all mothers of children whose fathers were serving soldiers should receive financial support from the State, regardless of marital status¹. In spite of campaigns, particularly by the radical feminists², before the war for an end to the discrimination and disabilities

1. P. Krische in AfFr, 1931-32, pp. 72-73.

2. Evans, op. cit., pp. 174-86 discusses the radicals' campaign.

suffered by unmarried mothers, this was the first relaxation of the harsh attitude which the State and society held towards those women who bore a child out of wedlock. After the war, the Weimar Constitution pronounced that illegitimate children should be the social equals of those born in wedlock; but it was clear from the legislation proposed in this area in the 1920s that the reformers were concerned only to remove the financial problems and the stigma which accompanied illegitimacy, and did not envisage any radical change in the position of the unmarried mother, who remained a social outcast. Any benefit which might accrue to her from reforms was purely incidental to what was felt to be best for the child¹. If this was the view of the liberals in the Republic, the conservatives were even less inclined to help a fallen woman: the Evangelical Church, for example, firmly maintained its hard-line attitude against "any pre-marital or extra-marital sexual intercourse"². The placing of legitimate and illegitimate children, of married and unmarried mothers, on an equal footing in the Soviet Union³ was seen as an example of the kind of evils that would result from any relaxation of moral standards.

Throughout the Weimar period, then, the lot of the unmarried mother remained a hard one, particularly if she lived alone and was obliged to work; little progress was made in finding an effective way

1. See, e.g., BA, R36/1438: parliamentary question no. 1706 by Marie-Elisabeth Lüders et al., 23 June, 1922; letter from Mohrmann, of the Archiv Deutscher Berufsvormünder e.V., to Oberbürgermeister Mitzlaff, 15 January, 1926; letter from Mende, of the Deutsches Archiv für Jugendwohlfahrt e.V., to the Deutscher Städtetag/Preussischer Städtetag, received 13 April, 1929.
2. "Aufruf des Deutschen Evangelischen Kirchenausschuss vom 25. Mai 1932", document in AfB, 1932, p. 96.
3. Halle, op. cit., p. 106.

of making the father support his child¹. In spite of this, the Civil Code still left the unmarried mother with no legal rights over her child. Goldmann and Grotjahn found that a large proportion of those in need of relief were unmarried mothers "who," they believed, "must be accepted in Germany because of the surplus of women over men". They reported that in 1925 33% (133 out of 406) of the mothers insured with the sickness fund of the AEG in Berlin were unmarried, and that this proportion was matched in a number of the other funds². This was, in fact, during the period when illegitimate births had been rising quite consistently, from 8.5% of all live births in 1905 to 11.4% in 1920 and 12% in 1925; in addition, there had been a higher rate of births out of wedlock in the peculiar circumstances of the last year of the war, 1918, when a figure of 13% was reached for the only time between 1905 and 1939. From the mid-1920s the illegitimacy rate declined steadily, again dropping to the 1905 level in 1934, and then falling even further to remain at 7.7% or 7.8% for the rest of the 1930s³. Thus, Nazi claims of restoring morality after the decadence of Weimar were belied by the downward trend in the illegitimacy figures from 1926; equally, allegations that the Nazis encouraged widespread procreation outside marriage to boost the birth rate are unfounded in

1. Krische, op. cit., p. 72.

2. Franz Goldmann and Alfred Grotjahn, op. cit., p. 69.

3. Figures from St.J.: 1934, p. 27; 1937, p. 37; 1939/40, p. 42; 1941/42, p. 66. Since there was a higher rate of dead births among illegitimate than legitimate children, the proportion of unmarried women who carried children was higher than the figures suggest; equally, the rate of infant mortality was higher among the illegitimate, and so a smaller proportion of women than that suggested by the figures had to bring up an illegitimate child.

the years 1933-39, although the situation changed dramatically after the outbreak of the Second World War¹.

At first, however, the Nazis did tend to associate unmarried motherhood with the licentiousness they claimed was propagated by the Marxists. An article in a Labour Front publication in August 1934 was thoroughly censorious, claiming that women who had a child out of wedlock tended to be emotionally unstable, were often heavy drinkers, psychopaths, or mentally ill, and therefore would often produce children who could not, with their heredity, be considered of value to the nation. There was a particular risk, continued the article, with those women who had two or more children out of wedlock by different fathers. It was, in any case, a fundamental tenet of National Socialism that loose morals could not be tolerated, since they were a threat to the family, which was the base of society. Thus, concluded the article, the State and the nation might show compassion to those "racially valuable" women who, in a moment of weakness, conceived children out of wedlock, but they could not condone their irresponsible behaviour².

From the population point of view, the unmarried mother could well have been considered a wasted asset. Even although there were many more women than men in the population, the problem was that the unmarried mother would normally have only the one child, as Himmler realised, and so her maternal potential would not be fulfilled³.

1. Official statistics, which had consistently given the illegitimate birth rate along with other population statistics since 1882, do not provide figures for the number or rate of illegitimate births in 1940, although they continue to give those for marriages, deaths, live births, etc. in St.J., 1941/42, p. 66. It is tempting to conclude that the figures were deliberately concealed because they were so high.

2. "Klarheit!", Der Deutsche, 11 August, 1934.

3. IfZ, MA 387, frame 5194, "Verein 'Lebensborn' e.V.", 31 May, 1937.

There was some confusion in the ranks of the Nazi Party, with the scruples of the puritans obviously in conflict with the desire to have and to support "racially valuable" children; the result was that little of material value was done in the 1930s to solve the problems or raise the status of the unmarried mother. From 1933 she did receive tax relief on her earnings to help her to maintain her child, and when the tax levied on single persons to provide funds for the marriage-loan scheme was described it was shown not to apply to unmarried mothers¹. This same ruling would, incidentally, apply to single women - like Lea Thimm, the women's representative in the Nazi doctors' organisation² - who adopted children. No doubt to allay fears that immorality was being encouraged by these meagre concessions, it was explained that if the State afforded aid to the unmarried mother and her child this did not denote its approval of what she had done³. But in spite of the protests and the moral indignation exhibited in some publications on the subject, it was slowly becoming clear that official attitudes towards the unmarried mother were at last softening.

The first tangible sign of the direction in which official policy was developing came in May 1937, with an order by the Minister of Justice that unmarried women could elect to be called "Frau" instead

1. "Gesetz zur Verminderung der Arbeitslosigkeit", RGB, 1933 I, 1 June, 1933, p. 327.

"Gesetz über die Einkommenbesteuerung für 1933", RGB, 1934 I, 21 December, 1933, p. 3.

2. BDC, Lea Thimm's Reichsärztekammer membership card, and answers to a questionnaire for the Journalists' Association, 10 January, 1934.

3. Alice Rilke, "Die ehelose Mutter im nationalsozialistischen Staat", VB, 30 August, 1934.

of "Fräulein", with a special provision that unmarried mothers must be addressed as "Frau" in all official business if they chose this designation¹. Ironically, this had been something the radical sexual reformers of the pre-war period had demanded², and among even the moderate feminists it had for long been customary to use the designation "Frau" for mature women, regardless of marital status³. In this area, then, with the provision of a single title for all women, if they so chose, and the improvement in the status of unmarried mothers that this implied, the Nazis were in line with the progressives of the past whom they had so castigated, and with radical opinion that developed some thirty years later than their own policy.

The Government found itself in a position where it would have to make a decision about the status of the unmarried mother, since the contentious issue of whether such a woman should be employed in the service of the State had not been settled in the Weimar period. In the summer of 1936 Frick called a meeting of interested parties to try to frame a policy on this matter, and to settle those cases currently under consideration⁴. One of these was a disagreement which had arisen between the Minister of Posts, who had fined a single woman

1. BA, R22/41, order of the Minister of Justice, no. 2697, "Führung der Bezeichnung 'Frau' durch unverheiratete weibliche Personen", Reichshaushalts- und Besoldungsblatt no. 18, 21 June, 1937, p. 201.
2. Anthony, op. cit., pp. 108-11 describes the campaign of the Bund für Mutterschutz to eliminate the title "Fräulein", particularly to protect unmarried mothers.
3. See, e.g., correspondence between Gertrud Bäumer and the friends and acquaintances who were, like her, unmarried, in Beckmann, op. cit., and BA, Kl.Erw., no. 296-(1).
4. BA, R43II/443, letter from Pfundtner to Lammers, 12 August, 1936.

employee for having a child and who favoured severity because of the immoral act which had led to it, and Hess, who advocated leniency and was campaigning against the punishment of Fräulein Wagner, the lady in question. This case raised two issues, namely should a woman be punished for having an illegitimate child, and, if so, should the penalty be dismissal from or ineligibility for public employment¹.

A further meeting was called for the end of October 1936. Among those invited were Himmler and Hess - who attended in person, as an indication of their growing interest in this matter - and several Ministers, who sent representatives; but Gertrud Scholtz-Klink, the National Women's Leader, was not invited to discuss a matter which was, after all, of immediate interest to women². No decision was reached, and the matter was left in the air while the general question of attitudes to unmarried motherhood, particularly with reference to its relevance for population policy, was discussed at length by a committee of Ministers, Gauleiters and population pundits³. As an interim measure, Hess, with the approval of Frick⁴, asked to be consulted in every case where proceedings were being contemplated against a woman official who had an illegitimate child, before a decision was

1. Ibid., notes by Seel at the Ministry of the Interior, 15 August, 1936.

2. BA, R43II/443, circular from Pfundtner to nine Ministers and Secretaries of State, 13 October, 1936.

3. BA, R43II/1523, circular from Pfundtner to 18 leading people in Party and State, 31 May, 1937.

4. BA, R43II/427, letter from Pfundtner to the Reich Ministers, 13 December, 1938.

given, so that he might influence it if he chose¹. Given the stand Hess had taken in the case of Fräulein Wagner, it was probable that he would generally intervene in favour of the woman concerned.

It was by now becoming clear that Himmler, too, was emerging as a champion of the unmarried mother, because, he said, she should be given credit for contributing to the population. No doubt he realised that if there was a change in attitudes she might be encouraged to have more children, whether out of wedlock and supported by the State, or in marriage as she became a more acceptable partner. But Himmler was extremely sensitive to suggestions that he was positively in favour of unmarried motherhood, and was at pains to refute rumours and complaints that his Lebensborn (Fount of Life) Association was directed at encouraging conception and birth out of wedlock. At the same time, he was anxious to point out that greater tolerance

"does not bring down the married mother to a certain level, but raises the unmarried mother to her proper place in the community, since she is, during and after her pregnancy, not a married or an unmarried woman, but a mother".

The unmarried mother, said Himmler, was a particularly vulnerable member of society whose legal interests, for example, required special protection; therefore he had decided to assume legal guardianship of illegitimate children where this seemed necessary, and, of course, only in the cases of "racially and hereditarily valuable" children. On the same racial basis, the Lebensborn homes for expectant and nursing mothers also admitted married women², and indeed one of their chief

1. Ibid., letter from Gramsch, the Prussian Prime Minister, to the Minister of the Interior, 4 January, 1939.

2. IfZ, op. cit., frames 5189-95.

functions lay in assisting the wives of SS men whose financial position was precarious¹. Even in May 1944 Himmler insisted that the ratio of legitimate to illegitimate babies born in the homes was "about 50-50, more likely 60-40 in favour of the legitimately born babies"².

The discussions which had been set in train by the meetings in 1936 clearly inclined towards a more enlightened attitude towards the unmarried mother. One symptom of this was a report in late 1938 of a recent spate of films released in the Rhineland which consistently featured the illegitimate child as a benefit to the nation from the population point of view. The Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung, which carried the article, drily asked the film industry to bear in mind that it was also possible to bring children into the world after a marriage had taken place³. This episode was indeed an attempt to gauge the climate of opinion in the country, and to influence it away from the earlier view held widely within the Party itself that equality for the unmarried mother and her child would "degrade and undermine" marriage and family life⁴. But the

1. IfZ, Fa 202, letter from an SS officer on behalf of the Governing Council of Lebensborn to SS officer Pohl, 21 June, 1938.
2. R. Manvell and H. Fraenkel, Heinrich Himmler, London, 1965, pp. 93-94. C.f. Richard Grunberger, "Lebensborn", Bulletin of the Wiener Library, July 1962, p. 52, who states that between 50% and 80% of the babies born in the homes were illegitimate. Kersten reports Himmler as saying in May 1943 that married women accounted for 50% of the confinements (op. cit., p. 180).
3. "Das interessante uneheliche Kind", Die Frau, December 1938, p. 162.
4. See, e.g., Else Vorwerck, "Gedanken über die Ehe im national-sozialistischen Staat", NS-Frauenbuch, Munich, 1934, pp. 147-48.

difficulty of reaching agreement on a change of policy was such that in 1940 it still had to be admitted that, after seven years of Nazi rule, not the slightest change had been made in the legal position; the relevant clauses of the Civil Code still stood, although the SS, at least, clearly felt that they were out of date. Indeed there had been lengthy discussions, particularly within the Nazi Lawyers' Association, and several proposals had been made, but the very number and variety of these were felt to be an indication of how difficult a problem this was to solve¹.

A decision was reached, however, within the restricted area of the employment of an unmarried mother in the public service. Early in 1939 the Minister of Justice expressed the view that the bearing of an illegitimate child should not of itself ever be made a reason for dismissal, although he would be inclined to a stricter attitude if the circumstances leading to the pregnancy - for example, if intercourse had taken place on official premises - gave the impression that the woman had abused her position and was likely to bring her office into disrepute². Six months later, the National Institute for Youth Welfare wrote to Frick to press for tolerance in this matter. Its argument was that the current climate of opinion, and the Government's population policy, made it desirable that women to whom there was no objection other than that they had had a child out of wedlock should be accepted for public service positions, or retained in

1. IfZ, Fa 202, letter from the staff of "Lebensborn" to Himmler's office, 15 February, 1940.
2. BA, R43II/427, letter from Freisler to the Reich Ministries, 13 January, 1939.

employment if the birth took place after their appointment¹. On receipt of this letter, Frick issued a statement to the state governments in the sense of the Minister of Justice's earlier remarks, asking that it be transmitted to the relevant authorities that the circumstances of a conception, rather than the fact of a woman official's having conceived, be the basis for any decision as to the advisability of employing or dismissing an unmarried mother².

This shift in official attitudes had taken place before Germany was at war; once there was the prospect of heavy carnage among the young men of the nation, the Government became obsessed with the problem of raising the birth rate, by any means. Hess brought the question of unmarried parenthood in this context into the open before the year 1939 was out. He sent Frick a copy of a long letter he had written to the pregnant fiancée of a soldier killed in action, with a request for a prompt regulation of the legal position of women who found themselves in this position, and Frick complied by sending out urgent invitations to discuss the matter³. Already, however, Hess had taken the unilateral step of announcing that the NSDAP would be prepared to assume the guardianship of children whose fathers perished in the war, on the grounds that

"considerations, which are justifiable in normal times, must for the present be overlooked.... What use is it if a nation is victorious, but through the sacrifices made for that victory it dies out?"

Thus, men and women - of pure racial descent - who created a new

1. Ibid., letter from the Deutsches Institut für Jugendhilfe e.V. to the Ministry of the Interior, 11 July, 1939.

2. Ibid., letter from Stuckart to the Land governments and the chief Government officials, 14 July, 1939.

3. BA, R43II/1286, letter from Frick to Lammers, 24 December, 1939.

life were giving the nation in time of war the next most precious thing to their own life, and should be honoured accordingly. Hess added that he was convinced that the German people would come to share his point of view before long, and that it would in future be prepared to treat as equal with married mothers those

"who, perhaps outside the bounds of bourgeois morality and custom, contribute to compensation for the blood sacrificed in the war...for...the life of the nation comes before all principles thought up by men, all conventions which carry the mark of recognised custom but not of morality, and before prejudice. The highest service a woman can render to the community is the gift of racially healthy children for the survival of the nation"¹.

Hess had managed to turn a message of comfort to a girl who found herself in the most distressing circumstances into barely-veiled encouragement for procreation outside marriage. His stand was welcomed by the SS weekly paper Das Schwarze Korps, which went on to agree that there must be a change in morals: in war, Himmler was quoted as saying, no soldier can go to the front, possibly to die, in peace of mind if he has not left heirs behind him. Therefore, the names "war-time father" and "war-time mother" would signify that in time of national emergency there were those who served their country not only in the field or in the factory, but by their contribution to the future of the nation by begetting and bearing children. Under these circumstances, girls who refused to serve their country by conceiving a child, out of wedlock if necessary, could be compared with army deserters, while those who did have illegitimate children could be secure in the knowledge that the State would welcome

1. Ibid., letter from Hess to the fiancée of a dead soldier, undated (covering letter, above, dated 24 December, 1939).

and support them¹. The entire tone of this article was nothing short of revolutionary, and the response to it vindicated those who had been on the side of caution in the matter of bringing in legislation to promote legal and social equality for the unmarried mother and her child.

It was, for example, hardly surprising that the Roman Catholic Church spoke out very strongly against the new morality proposed by Hess and the SS. At the festival of - appropriately enough - the Holy Family in January 1940 the bishops' pastoral letter, which in recent years had concentrated on attacking the Sterilisation Law, criticised particularly Hess's much-publicised letter and Himmler's frequent utterances supporting extra-marital procreation. Cardinal Faulhaber, particularly, made it clear that the view of the Church on the sanctity of marriage and the sinfulness of unchastity remained what it had always been, and that the war could not alter it. The Church was so incensed that, as Himmler's agents reported, in some areas priests were telling their congregations that the war was God's punishment for the moral depravity currently encouraged by the nation's leadership².

Others were not so sweeping in their condemnation of the new morality; Gertrud Bäumer pointed out that the proposals now being made by Party leaders for some regularising of the position of illegitimate children were not dissimilar from those for which she and her associates

1. "Der Sieg der Frauen", Das Schwarze Korps, 4 January, 1940.

2. BA, R58/147, MadR, 15 January, 1940.

IfZ, MA 441/1, frame 2-750508, MadR, 22 December, 1939, reports a Roman Catholic priest as saying publicly that Germany will lose the war if the current increase in immorality is not reversed.

had consistently campaigned, as a matter of common sense. But she also believed that there was a very sharp difference between fathering a child and regarding fatherhood as a continuing commitment within a family¹. Her friend Dorothee von Velsen was quite horrified by the article in Das Schwarze Korps, and also frustrated by the need to keep her criticism private². Gertrud Bäumer was, however, able to take some comfort from the fact that, although she could not publish her views, open opposition to the article had been voiced by the women in the leadership of the Nazi women's organisation, who had called SS officers to a meeting to face questions about it³. It is clear, however, that the Nazi women were in no position to challenge this change in policy, particularly since it was enunciated in time of national emergency.

The SS was unrepentant, and its paper led demands for legal action in favour of those who were "considered up till now 'illegitimate'". Financial aid for the unmarried mother was seen as a top priority, and the suggestion was made that the needy might be paid a monthly sum to enable them to support their child. In addition, there should, said Das Schwarze Korps, be full medical facilities for the confinement, a ban on the dismissal or demotion of the mother from work, and a prison sentence for any who besmirched the good name of an unmarried

1. BA, Kl.Erw., no. 296-(1), letter from Gertrud Bäumer to Dorothee von Velsen, 4 April, 1940.
2. Ibid., letter from Dorothee von Velsen to Gertrud Bäumer, 31 March, 1940.
3. Ibid., letter from Gertrud Bäumer to Dorothee von Velsen, 4 April, 1940.

mother¹. But this enlightened policy - adopted as it was for aggressive reasons - created financial problems which Himmler and his men had apparently not foreseen. In summer 1940 Himmler reported to Keitel that

"as a result of extensive troop movements illegitimate pregnancies have reached an unprecedented height since the beginning of the war.... The fathers of 90% of the illegitimate children born in the Lebensborn homes are serving soldiers".

Accordingly, the initial system, by which the homes had been financed by a levy on SS men and used specifically for their children², was inadequate now that the homes had been opened to a far wider circle, and so Himmler now asked that Keitel try to interest the army in the work of Lebensborn and, more important, to put some of the funds at the disposal of the army towards the upkeep of the homes³.

The Party responded to the new moral climate by awarding a cash grant to full-time single women employees who had a child on the same basis as to a married man who had a legitimate child⁴. And the Government agreed to provide money grants to unmarried mothers who were in need of support. But it operated in a rather half-hearted way, carefully vetting each case to ensure that the claimant was indeed in poor financial circumstances, and also of good character⁵. In the

1. "Ein Frau hat das Wort", Das Schwarze Korps, 11 April, 1940.

2. IfZ, MA 387, frame 5189, "Verein 'Lebensborn' e.V.", 31 May, 1937.

3. IfZ, Fa 202, letter from Himmler to Keitel, undated, ?late July, 1940.

4. IfZ, MA 135, frames 136153-54, letters from the Kreisleitung Erkelenz to its DAF and NSV officials, 3 February, 1941, and the Gauschatzmeister of Cologne to his Kreisleitungen, 30 January, 1941.

5. BA, R43II/1286a, letter from Ehrich, in the Chancellery, to the Gauleitung in South Hanover-Brunswick, 12 February, 1941.

case of one Helene Richter, however, a lump sum of RM 125 was recommended in spite of the fact that she had previously been jailed for assisting with abortions. It was said that her character was otherwise good and, at least as important, that she seemed to be thoroughly "politically reliable"¹. But in approving this grant an official in the Chancellery wrote to Helene Richter to emphasise that grants could in fact be made only in exceptional cases

"since the means for them are small. I therefore ask you not to acquaint others with the fact that you have been given aid, so as not to encourage the submitting of applications which are hopeless, and can result only in disappointment"².

The high idealism of the SS caused dismay among the bureaucrats who had to operate the system and who were well aware that the Government could not suddenly assume financial responsibility for the large numbers of children that Himmler, oblivious to the financial implications of his scheme, was encouraging.

Himmler continued for the rest of the war to be obsessed by the problems of overcoming "middle-class convention" and "defying existing laws and explaining to my men that children are always a great blessing, legitimate or not". He admitted to Kersten in 1943 that he had already, discreetly, given notice that women anxious to have children could have "racially pure" men provided as "conception assistants"; only a few women had responded so far, but Himmler hoped to extend the scheme greatly after the war, even to make it compulsory, eventually, for women of good stock. Together with Bormann, he also

1. Ibid., letter from the Hanover Chief of Police to the Chancellery, 13 March, 1941.
2. Ibid., letter from Meerwald, in the Chancellery, to Helene Richter, 25 July, 1941.

had plans for encouraging bigamy. His explanation was that

"There is one purpose behind all these measures...to safeguard and improve the racial qualities of the Greater German Reich, so that it can accomplish its great tasks both in the centre of Europe and against the increasing avalanche of Asian peoples"¹.

Now, it cannot be disputed that a more enlightened attitude towards the unmarried mother and her child than that current in most parts of inter-war Europe was thoroughly desirable; but Himmler's motives were completely indefensible. What he, Hess - before his "mission" to Scotland in 1941 - and Bormann proposed, besides, was nothing short of a revolution, which would drastically alter the nature, and perhaps even threaten the existence, of the family unit which the Nazis had originally pledged themselves to preserve and promote. The benefit which may have accrued to the unmarried mother - provided that she was "racially valuable" - was, as in the Weimar period, purely incidental, this time, however, not to the welfare of the child but to the naked power ambitions of the Nazi leadership.

1. Kersten, op. cit., pp. 176-82.

Hans-Jürgen Luthhöft, Der nordische Gedanke in Deutschland 1920-1940, Stuttgart, 1971, pp. 395-96.

CHAPTER THREE

The Employment of Women outside the HomeIntroduction

A discussion of the employment of women in the 1930s must centre on Nazi policy. It has been generally accepted that the Nazis aimed to reduce, or even eliminate, the employment of women outside the home, particularly as a means of easing the unemployment problems Germany faced in the early 1930s; but the extent to which the Nazis actually pursued this goal, and the means they used, have barely been considered. Equally, it is now accepted that the Nazis were forced to try to encourage women to enter employment in the later 1930s, as the regime's power ambitions led to the development of an economy geared to the possibility of limited war; but while Dr. Mason has dealt with some aspects of this subject¹, there has been no thorough-going investigation of it. The aim of this chapter is to try to remedy these deficiencies, by setting the question of women's employment in its context after the Great War, by showing how Nazi attempts to reduce women's employment were largely based on false premises, and soon abandoned, by discussing the Nazis' organisation for supervising women workers and attending to their welfare - largely for reasons of population policy - and by considering the attempts of the Nazi Government to persuade, cajole or even coerce women into work once Germany was at war in the autumn of 1939. The signal failure of these attempts reinforces suggestions made by other writers² that while the

1. T. W. Mason, "National Socialist Policies towards the German Working Classes", unpublished Oxford D.Phil. thesis, 1971, pp. 614-23, 648-49.

2. Ibid., pp. 590-96, 605, 642.

H. R. Trevor-Roper, The Last Days of Hitler, London, 1972 (9th revised printing), pp. 53-54.

Nazi regime was indeed dictatorial, it was unable to force its will on the German people when there was confusion and disagreement within the upper échelons of Party and Government, and when there was deep-rooted opposition to its policies.

A. The Employment of Women after the Great War

The Great War, with its heavy toll of male casualties¹, and the inflation consequent upon the war, were important in increasing the scope and extent of women's employment outside the home beyond the considerable dimensions they had reached before 1914. It was, however, the rationalisation of industry and business, following the stabilisation of the currency in 1924, which had the most profound impact on this development: mechanisation, one of its major characteristics, led directly to a fundamental change in the demand for various types of labour. Tasks which had previously been performed by skilled workers - and this meant almost exclusively by men - could now be carried out much more efficiently by machines, for whose operation cheaper semi-skilled or even unskilled labour sufficed. It rapidly became apparent to employers that women were far preferable to men for this kind of work, for two reasons: first, and most obviously, women were cheaper to employ, with even skilled women paid at a lower rate than unskilled men; but at least as important was the discovery that women actually tended to be better machine operators than men. This was the case not only in wage-earning occupations; the real revolution was in white-collar jobs, where the increasing use of the typewriter and the calculating machine

1. Figures illustrating the effect this had on the sex ratio in Germany after the Great War have been given on p. 44.

facilitated the replacement of men with skills which had formerly been essential by women whose dexterity and acceptance of monotonous work only enhanced their advantage, already strong from the financial point of view¹.

The 1925 census showed that about one-third of the 3.5 million employees in white-collar occupations were women², which Kracauer attributed to the need for more women than formerly to support themselves after the war³. This view was confirmed by an inquiry carried out in 1929 which revealed that 93% of the sample of women interviewed were unmarried, and that their age distribution indicated that for many employment was not merely a temporary stage in their life but a career⁴. About a quarter of a million white-collar women workers were members of unions in the later 1920s⁵, and these led a campaign to try to achieve equal pay for women in clerical jobs⁶. In fact, women employees were paid on average between 10% and 15% less than men in the same grade of job; and on the whole women were

1. Judith Grünfeld, "Frauenarbeit im Lichte der Rationalisierung", Die Arbeit, 1931, no. 12, pp. 911-13, 922.

Ludwig Preller, Sozialpolitik in der Weimarer Republik, Stuttgart, 1949, pp. 115, 125, 136.

2. Report in WuS, 1930, no. 13, p. 558.

3. Siegfried Kracauer, Die Angestellten, Frankfurt, 1930 (reprinted by Verlag für Demoskopie, Allensbach and Bonn, 1959), p. 5.

4. Report in FiS, January 1930, p. 10.

5. Figures from St.J.: 1927, pp. 511-12; 1928, pp. 592-93.

6. Maria Hellersberg, "Die soziale Not der weiblichen Angestellten", speech made on 15 January, 1928, at a congress of women white-collar workers, printed as no. 43 of Schriftenreihe des Gewerkschaftsbundes der Angestellten, Berlin, 1928, pp. 22-23.

to be found in the lower-grade, poorly-paid positions¹. When the depression came, it hit white-collar workers as a group much less severely than it hit industrial workers, although there were many cases of individual hardship among them². Men and women in offices and shops suffered to a similar extent: women accounted for 41.3% of the unemployed in these positions in 1932³, while the 1933 census showed that they constituted 42.2% of all employees in these areas⁴.

In industry, the fields in which women had traditionally been chiefly employed were textiles and clothing, which together accounted for about half of all women in industry in the first quarter of the twentieth century. In 1925, over 1.5 million women, out of a total of 2.9 million in industry, were employed in these two areas. In third position came the food, drink and tobacco industries, with over 400,000 women between them⁵. But in the 1920s women were also beginning to figure in industries in which they had formerly been represented either negligibly or not at all; a case in point was the metal industry, where some works recorded the employment of women for the first time in the 1925 census return⁶. In the later 1920s

1. Ibid.

Kracauer, op. cit., p. 7.

Herta Schmidt, "Die Berufsarbeit der Frau", FiS, May 1931, p. 6.

2. Kracauer, op. cit., pp. 38-39, vividly describes some examples of this.

3. Calculated from figures in St.J., 1933, p. 291.

4. Figures from St.D.R., vol. 451, part 3, p. 40.

5. Figures from St.J., 1933, p. 22. For comparison, the 1925 census also recorded that there were a million female domestic servants (op. cit., p. 23).

6. A. Vallentin, "The Employment of Women Since the War", ILR, vol. 25, 1932, pp. 493-94.

this trend greatly intensified, partly as a result of the rationalisation process generally, and partly because employers saw the employment of cheaper female labour as the only way of keeping down costs at a time when wages generally had risen, since the war. An additional factor was that women were therefore once more, as in war-time, being increasingly employed in work, particularly with heavy machinery, which was extremely unsuitable for them¹. There was growing anxiety about this, particularly when young girls were involved, since it was becoming apparent that their physical development was suffering, so that their ability to bear healthy children was being diminished by work where there was extreme heat, dirt, dust, and by the need to stand continuously for hours to work a machine².

To try to combat the worst effects of industrial work on women and young people a piecemeal scheme of labour protection had been built up in the later 19th century. Article 157 of the Weimar Constitution had promised the introduction of a unified system of labour legislation to protect all workers as far as possible from danger and damaging conditions at work, but this was yet another pious hope which came to nothing in the political and economic difficulties of the 1920s. Women, however, benefited from a law, operative in 1927, which brought Germany into line with the Washington Convention of 1919 in the matter of employing women before and after child-birth³. This provided for up to twelve weeks' leave around the confinement, during

1. Judith Grünfeld, op. cit., pp. 912-17.

2. Ibid., p. 921.

Hildegard Jüngst, Die Jugendliche Fabrikarbeiterin, Paderborn, 1929, pp. 36-38.

3. "Arbeiterinnen- und Mutterschutz", JADG, 1927, p. 204.

which time maternity benefit was payable by the sickness funds, dismissal was illegal, and on returning to work a nursing mother was to be allowed time for feeding her baby¹. The Free Trade Unions admitted that this was a real improvement, but pointed out that it was only the first step towards a proper, comprehensive labour protection system². The depression, however, put their demands beyond the realm of possibility in the short term, as they acknowledged at the end of 1930, accepting that it was hard enough for the exchequer to find money even to operate the 1927 law³.

In spite of the economic difficulties, however, the Government continued to demonstrate interest in labour protection, with the reintroduction in 1930 of earlier measures, repealed during the war, to protect women working in glassworks, rolling-mills and foundries⁴. Medical investigations into the effects of certain industries on women's physiology - particularly from the gynaecological point of view - were carried out which showed, for example, that women working in tobacco factories were highly susceptible to nicotine poisoning which contributed to a high rate of miscarriages among them and infant mortality among their offspring⁵ - a serious finding for a nation with

1. Johannes Feig, "The New Labour Protection Bill", ILR, vol. 15, 1927, p. 190.

2. JADG, op. cit., pp. 205-07.

3. Report in JADG, 1930, p. 194.

4. Ibid.

"Verordnung über die Beschäftigung von Arbeitern unter achtzehn Jahren und von Arbeiterinnen in der Glasindustrie", RGB, 1930 I, 26 March 1930, p. 105.

5. S. M. Klein in AfFr, 1931-32, pp. 34-43.

M. Sserdjnkoff in AfFr, 1932, pp. 264-65.

a declining birth rate. Even in the textile industry, where large numbers of women had been employed for long enough, conditions were found to be poor, with inadequate lighting and ventilation in factories and an insufficiency of seating and toilet facilities¹. Clearly, much was still left to be desired in German labour legislation, but equally clearly the growing interest in conditions at work suggested that further legislation would be contemplated in an improved economic situation.

The two largest trade union groupings, the Free and the Christian unions, were unequivocally in favour of special protection for women at work², no doubt at least partly because of the relative strength of their women's sections³. Although numbers - and women's share - dropped in the 1920s after a peak in 1920, when women's share in both combines was about one-fifth, the total membership revived modestly with the depression biting, so that in 1930 there were altogether 4.7 million members of the Free unions and three-quarters of a million in the Christian unions. But the decline of women's share to 14% in both groups⁴ seemed to confirm the view that women were readier

1. Annemarie Hermberg, "'Mein Arbeitstag - Mein Wochenende'", Die Arbeit, 1931, no. 2, p. 168.

2. JADG, 1927, op. cit., p. 205.

IfZ, MA 422, frames 5-455196-97, letter from Mina Amann to the leaders of unions in the Christian Trade Union movement, 23 June, 1931.

3. Marguerite Thibert, "The Economic Depression and the Employment of Women", ILR, vol. 27, 1933, p. 461, states that Germany had a much larger women's membership in the trade unions than many countries.

4. Figures from St.J.: 1921/22, p. 458; 1923, p. 436; 1928, pp. 594-95; 1931, p. 558; 1932, p. 557.

to give up union membership in times of high unemployment¹. The Free unions undertook a massive campaign, led by Gertrud Hanna, to attract more women², and support for improved conditions at work was no doubt regarded as good propaganda for this purpose.

But there were those who saw labour protection as a way of putting women at a disadvantage on the labour market, and who suspected - not without some justification - that the male-dominated trade unions promoted it for precisely this reason. In June 1929 the Open Door International for the Economic Emancipation of the Woman Worker was founded in Berlin, for the following purpose:

"To secure that a woman shall be free to work and protected as a worker on the same terms as a man, and that legislation and regulations...shall be based upon the nature of the work and not upon the sex of the worker; and to secure for a woman, irrespective of marriage or childbirth, the right at all times to decide whether or not she shall engage in paid work, and to ensure that no legislation or regulations shall deprive her of this right"³.

The aim of the Open Door, then, was to achieve complete, literal, and even absurd equality for women. Its chief supporters in Germany were to be found among the radical feminists⁴, who felt that special protection for women robbed them of the right to choose the kind of work they would do⁵. The trade unions were completely opposed to the

1. Marguerite Thibert, op. cit., p. 462.

2. "Frauenarbeit und Gewerkschaften", Gewerkschaftszeitung, 11 January, 1930, pp. 21-22.

3. Report of the Third Conference of the Open Door International, Prague, July 24-28, 1933, p. 43. The ODI's headquarters were in London.

4. Lida Gustava Heymann, "The Open Door Council", FiS, May 1929, p. 1.

5. Thönnessen, op. cit., p. 166.

Open Door, regarding it on the one hand as an embarrassment and on the other as a threat to the development of further protective legislation, even if it could not undo what had already been achieved¹. On the whole, the new organisation made little impact in Germany, seeming largely irrelevant in the economic crisis, but it did continue to hold international conferences during the 1930s, abroad².

The expansion of women's employment after the Great War would have been desirable if the German economy had also been expanding, as it had done before the war. But in a situation where it was jobs, and not labour, that were in short supply, a situation intensified by mechanisation on a large scale, the influx of an increased number of women onto the labour market was potentially serious. With recession setting in, in late 1927, to be compounded in 1930 by deep depression, it became a real problem. The reason for the increase in the female labour force was attributed by Agnes von Zahn-Harnack, President of the BDF, to technical improvements in the home and to smaller families, which had made the occupation of wife and mother a less full-time one than formerly³; but she can have been referring only to her own constituency, the middle class. It was a much more widely-held view that working-class women worked almost exclusively

1. Report in JADG, 1930, p. 191.

IfZ, loc. cit.

2. After the Prague Conference in 1933, conferences were held in Copenhagen in 1935 and Cambridge in 1938. Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Britain and Sweden were the chief centres of the movement's activity after 1933, the emigration of the chief German representatives bringing activity there to an end. See the reports of the Copenhagen and Cambridge Conferences.

3. "Das Berufsschicksal der weiblichen Jugend", BF, November 1931, p. 2.

out of necessity¹. This double burden of a full-time job and a family to care for after work was oppressive to many, and led a commentator to remark: "The working-class wife is the tragic figure of our age"².

In addition to factors which forced or encouraged women to take a job in the 1920s, there was another reason for the vast increase in the number of women in employment, from 8.5 million in 1907 to 11.5 million in 1925. In 1907, only about half of the very large number of Germans born since the founding of the Empire were of working age, while in 1925 almost all of those born in the decades of the high birth rate before the Great War were of working age. Even given the losses in the war, the number of men in employment had risen between 1907 and 1925, although the overall result had been to increase women's share in the labour force by 2%, to almost 36% of the total³. A change in the supply of labour would, however, become apparent, but not until about 1935, when those born in the 1870s began to retire, to be only partially replaced by those born in the lean war and post-war years of

1. Agnes Karbe, Die Frauenlohnfrage, Rostock, 1928, pp. 88, 130.

Gertrud Hanna, "Vom Kampf gegen die verheirateten erwerbstätigen Frauen", Die Arbeit, 1931, p. 259.

Schwabach, op. cit., p. 95.

2. Ibid., p. 132.

3. Figures from St.J., 1930, p. 23. The 1907 figures are given in adjusted form, taking the loss of population in 1919 into account, to give comparability.

A. Vallentin, op. cit., p. 492, comments on the relationship between the growth of the population and that of the labour force.

birth.

For the time being, then, the absolute number of people of working age continued to grow. But, according to official estimates, the increase was greater among men than among women after 1925; in fact, in 1929 and 1930 the total number of women in the labour force actually declined, by 25,000 and 94,000 respectively, while men's numbers still increased, although at a slower rate. But the most significant feature was that the decline in women's numbers was due solely to a drop in the number of single women in the labour force, from 1927, while the number of married women showed a net rise every year, even in 1930, when there had been a reduction of 25,000 in the total number of working people compared with 1929¹. These figures would not, of course, be known to the mass of the population, and even those writing about the employment situation in the early 1930s generally based their comments on the results of the 1925 census; nevertheless, the situation represented by these figures must have created the general impression that more and more married women were working, at a time of rising unemployment.

As jobs became ever scarcer², employers had the pick of the labour market, and often they chose to employ women, as cheaper labour, while men lost their jobs; the result was that in many cases a wife would have to work to support the family, on a wage lower than that previously earned by her husband, because she could find work and

1. Report in WuS, loc. cit.

2. Official statistics on those receiving unemployment benefit or emergency relief give total numbers of 1.06 million in October 1929, 1.98 million in December 1929, and 2.66 million in February 1930. Figures from Vierteljahrshefte für Statistik des Deutschen Reiches, 1930, vol. 1, p. 141.

he could not¹. In spite of the narrowing of the differential between men's and women's wages, as a result primarily of the war but also of the 1923 inflation², women were left with take-home pay which was considerably lower than men's. Even in the textile industry, a female stronghold, where women tended to do the same kind of work as men, women spinners in 1930 still received only two-thirds of the hourly wage rate paid to men, although women weavers fared rather better, with 83% of men's rates³. This latter figure was, however, exceptionally high; across a broader spectrum of industry it was found, in 1928, that skilled and semi-skilled women - unfortunately usually classed together - earned about 63% of a skilled man's wage, while unskilled women earned 52%. Unskilled men, by contrast, earned 78% of a skilled man's wage. In 1932, after the wage cuts introduced by the Government to try to combat the depression, the relative positions were broadly the same as in 1928⁴. It was, therefore, still advantageous to an employer to take on a skilled woman, to whom he could pay a lower wage than that payable to an unskilled man.

But their relative inexpensiveness was not the only reason for women's continuing to work as men were laid off. Even more important was the fact that women were chiefly to be found in those sectors of the economy which were less severely affected by the depression. Women were predominantly employed in the consumer goods

1. Karbe, op. cit., p. 113.

2. Bry, op. cit., p. 96.

3. Calculated from figures in St.J., 1933, p. 272.

4. Calculated from figures in "The General Level of Wages in Mines, Industries and Transport", ILR, 1938, vol. 37, p. 105.

industries, which maintained a reasonable level of output during the crisis: although employment in relation to total labour capacity in this area dropped to 48% throughout the second half of 1932, it remained above 60% most of the time in the food, textile and luxury industries¹, in which, together, women constituted almost half of the labour force. By contrast, women's share in industry as a whole was less than a quarter². On the other hand, the production goods industries suffered much more, with employment in relation to total capacity as low as 35% throughout 1932. The area affected worst of all was the building trade, which could reach a figure of only 23% in summer 1932, with figures catastrophically low - at 12% at the start of 1932 and 14% at the start of 1933 - as its seasonal character compounded the effects of the crisis³. The building trade - accounting for 9% of all unemployment in 1932 - was almost exclusively a male preserve, employing women as less than 2% of its labour force. The other area which was disastrously hit was the metal industry, in which women comprised less than 4% of the work force⁴.

These details contributed to a picture where women, constituting 35% of all working people in Germany, accounted for just under 20% of the unemployed in 1931 and 1932, the worst years of the crisis⁵.

1. Figures from St.J., 1933, p. 309.

2. The 1925 census showed that women's share in the three industries mentioned was 46%, while that in industry as a whole was 23%. Figures calculated from information in St.J., 1930, p. 88.

3. Figures from St.J., 1933, loc. cit.

4. Calculated from figures in St.J., 1930, loc. cit.

5. Figures from St.J., 1933, p. 291.

Even if it is accepted that some women who lost their jobs probably did not register as unemployed, it is nevertheless clear that women survived the economic crisis better than men, very largely because a reasonable level of demand was maintained in those industries in which they chiefly figured, while they were employed in relatively insignificant numbers in those industries which bore the major burden of the unemployment. But whatever the reason, the impression was growing that women, by occupying jobs, were keeping men out of work; the response to this was a growing campaign from the autumn of 1930 to replace women who had jobs by unemployed men.

B. The Campaign against the Woman Worker, 1930-34

The 1925 census had shown that 68% of all employed women were single, widowed or divorced¹; these would probably have to support themselves, and perhaps also dependants in addition - almost always on a lower income than men, as a radical feminist pointed out². Nevertheless, in December 1930 the Economics Party proposed that the employment of women generally - and particularly of women holding what they termed "men's positions" - should be restricted, unless they had absolutely no other means of support. This clear attack on the wives and daughters of employed men reinforced an attack made by a right-wing white-collar union on the daughters of wealthy families who had a job and therefore "increased the misery of those who have no-one to provide for them"³. It was certainly true

1. Calculated from figures in St.D.R., no. 451, part 3, p. 76.

2. Herta Schmidt, loc. cit.

3. Gertrud Hanna, op. cit., p. 260.

that girls from prosperous middle-class families were to be found in clerical jobs, working for pocket money rather than for subsistence¹, but they were only a tiny minority of employed women. However, those who attacked the employment of women in time of depression often did so for ideological reasons rather than because they believed that the removal of women from jobs would solve the unemployment problem. The Churches, with their view of the place of women in family life, were a case in point². And the Nazis, in their anxiety about the birth rate, claimed that the present situation degraded women, prevented their devoting themselves to family life, and deprived "fathers of families" of the right to work³.

If there were some generalised attacks on the employment of women as a group, the main burden of complaint was against the married woman who had a job, who, it was claimed, was giving some families an extra wage, over and above that earned by the actual breadwinner, the father, while in other families - as a consequence, it was implied - the breadwinner was without work. These women, the Doppelverdiener, were felt to be not only depriving able men of work, but were even threatening the very existence of whole families. It was thus against them that the full force of official concern and widespread unofficial propaganda ~~was~~^{was} directed.

1. Kracauer, op. cit., p. 65.

2. Grete Stoffel, "Die Arbeitslosigkeit und die Frauenarbeit", FiS, August/September 1931, p. 6.

Leo Zodrow, "Die Doppelbelastung der Frau in Familie und Erwerbsberuf", Stimmen der Zeit, vol. 171, 1962-63, p. 376.

3. Karl Fiehler, "Sozialgesetzgebung", Nationalsozialistisches Jahrbuch, 1927, pp. 122-23.

Report in VB, 4 April, 1934.

Early in 1931, the Minister of Employment, Stegerwald, asked a commission to consider the possibility of legislation to restrict the Doppelverdiener; but it was on the basis of the commission's report that he decided against such a course. Instead, he instructed the Employment Exchanges that where they had to place applicants for jobs, they should take the social circumstances of candidates of equal suitability into account. In addition, he announced that he would write to employers to ask them to co-operate by making their choice of labour - for firing or hiring - at least partially dependent on whether the person involved was or would be bringing a second income into a home. Stegerwald was convinced that, for psychological reasons, the exchanges would have to be seen to be taking some action to restrict the employment of the Doppelverdiener¹. It was clear that this measure was indeed directed primarily against married women, since the Minister added that it should not be applied to young people living with their parents, in case their long-term career prospects might suffer². The Brüning Government, then, was anxious to take action, and to be seen to be taking action; but even in this emergency it was unwilling - or, perhaps, unable - to legislate.

The attacks on employed married women were met by defence of her position from a number of quarters. Although many men trade unionists were prepared to join in the attacks, the large and influential socialist federation of unions, the ADGB (General German Trade Union Association) repeatedly reminded its members that its position was clear,

1. Report in RAB, 1931 I, no. 15, 25 May, 1931, pp. 101-02.

2. Report in RAB, 1931 I, no. 18, 25 June, 1931, p. 137.

namely that it opposed the campaign against the employment of married women since it infringed their rights and would not achieve its aim - of eliminating unemployment - anyway¹. By 1930, the ADGB had decided that the only way to prevent women from being given preference over men simply because they were cheaper to employ would be to launch a concerted attack to achieve better wages for women². But this of itself would not solve the problems of families where the man's wage was so low that the wife had to work, to help to feed and clothe her children, not to buy them luxuries³. This situation, said the Communist Party, was a natural result of the capitalist system, where in a crisis the employers still managed to come out on top, by reducing wages and pocketing the amount they saved. Women, "the weakest part of the proletariat", were paid miserable wages because employers believed them to be more docile⁴. Alone of political parties the KPD unequivocally demanded the abolition of wage differentials altogether, and the upholding of a woman's right to work on equal terms with men⁵.

The many women who jumped to the defence of their own sex did

1. Report in JADG, 1930, pp. 193-94.

2. Gewerkschaftszeitung, op. cit., p. 23.

3. Judith Grünfeld, op. cit., pp. 921-24.

Karbe, op. cit., pp. 88, 130, 136.

4. BA, R45IV/10, "Die Auswirkungen der Papennotverordnung für die Frauen", pp. 1-2.

5. BA, R2/18554, Reichstag motion no. 1201, 15 October, 1931, signed by Communist deputies.

not, however, tend to argue that women should have equal rights with men in the employment market in time of depression; they concentrated on trying to disprove the case that the dismissal of the Doppelverdiener would solve the unemployment problem. Even the radical feminist Grete Stoffel affirmed the priority of men with families to support, although she did suggest that any "double earnings" rule should equally allow for the dismissal of the husband of a woman who owned a business¹. Gertrud Hanna, leader of the ADGB's women's section², pointed out that the vast majority of wives listed in 1925 as employed were still working in 1931, in spite of the mounting campaign against them, because "it could not be otherwise". Her analysis of the distribution of the 3.7 million married women listed as employed showed that by far the largest group, some 77% of the total, were classed as "assisting family members", who worked full-time, but not for a fixed wage, in their husband's business; and three-quarters of these, or slightly more than two million, were engaged in agriculture. Gertrud Hanna claimed, rightly, that these women could only in very exceptional cases be replaced by unemployed men, who would have to be paid a fair wage; in addition, if these women were obliged to give up their job, many would have to dismiss paid help from the household, which would certainly be harmful to the labour market³.

A few months later, Maria Hellersberg gave a similar analysis in

1. Grete Stoffel, op. cit., p. 5.

2. Gewerkschaftszeitung, op. cit., p. 22.

3. Gertrud Hanna, op. cit., p. 254.

the relatively conservative magazine Die Bayerische Frau, and went on to point out that a further two categories of working married women could be eliminated from consideration as Doppelverdiener who could be dismissed. The 309,000 women with their own business could hardly be replaced by men, for obvious reasons, she said; presumably this was because their jobs would not have existed without them. In addition, the 44,000 married women in domestic service might be replaceable "in individual cases" by unemployed single women, but certainly not by men. That left the wage-earning, salary-earning and professional married women, and Maria Hellersberg whittled their numbers down to half a million by eliminating about 276,000 women in the textile, clothing and food industries in areas where, she pointed out, only a very few men had ever been employed¹. Marguerite Thibert subtracted another large group, arguing that children's nurses, dressmakers and milliners could hardly be replaced by unemployed men. The highest number of working married women who, she estimated, were in jobs which men could do equally well was 200,000, a figure already suggested by Else Lüders in the Employment Ministry's official gazette². And these 200,000 women could hardly, as Marguerite Thibert somewhat drily remarked, be replaced by the four million or more men who were unemployed in 1931-32³.

Given the mounting opposition to the employment of married women, particularly, in the depression, it might have been expected

1. Maria Hellersberg, "Die Berufsarbeit der Frau", BF, February 1932, p. 2. Maria Hellersberg was a leading member of the white-collar union the Gewerkschaftsbund der Angestellten.

2. Else Lüders, "Die Erhaltung der Familie in der Gegenwart", RAB, 1931 II, no. 7, 5 March, 1931, p. 108.

3. Marguerite Thibert, op. cit., p. 622.

that they would find it harder than men to obtain unemployment benefit. The institution of what amounted to a household means test before emergency relief would be granted, in 1930¹, was one way in which a wife - or a daughter, for that matter - could find her chances of receiving State support much reduced. But at the worst of the crisis women were still receiving benefit more or less to the same extent as men: in 1932, women's share among the recipients of the two main kinds of support, unemployment benefit and emergency relief, was 19.9% and 19.4% respectively, at a time when their proportion among the registered unemployed was 19.9%². Thus it is clear that the number of unemployed women, including married women, who were found not to be in need of support was very small indeed, reinforcing claims made before and during the depression that most married women worked out of dire necessity. Not only, then, did women generally withstand the depression better than men; they also had an even chance with men of obtaining support from public funds. If this was because women's need was as great as men's, it was nevertheless hardly likely to mollify those who believed that there should be positive discrimination in favour of men.

In fact men did benefit marginally more than women from the work creation programme begun tentatively by Brüning before his dismissal. The Labour Service, for which public funds were provided

1. "Verordnung über die Krisenfürsorge für Arbeitslose", RGB, 1930 I, 11 October, 1930, pp. 463-64.
2. Calculated from figures in St.J., 1933, p. 299.

by a law passed in July 1931¹, was largely a male concern, with only 5,000 of the 175,000 places available in January 1933 allotted to women². But these numbers were minute compared with the problem the Labour Service was supposed to be helping to solve. Nevertheless, hardship was greatly eased in a few individual cases; for example, the DVP's Women's Review described in glowing terms how it had become possible to provide work for redundant women office workers by setting them to work mending clothes and cooking in return for Labour Service remuneration³. Much of the time women were used for similar domestic purposes; while the men were gathered together in camps to undertake work in agriculture or in public works schemes, in return for board, lodgings and pocket money⁴, the women were generally put to work cooking and cleaning for them⁵. On a smaller scale, the Red Cross in Bremen

1. "Verordnung über die Förderung des freiwilligen Arbeitsdienst", RGB, 1931 I, 23 July, 1931, pp. 398-400.
2. Maria Burgstaller, "Der Deutsche Frauenarbeitsdienst", NS-Frauenbuch, Munich, 1934, p. 26.
In fact, in January 1932 the Labour Service consisted of 14,000 volunteers, constituting 0.2% of the total number of registered unemployed; in November 1932, 285,000 (5.3% of the registered unemployed) gave the best figure for the Labour Service before the Nazi takeover. Figures from St.J.: 1933, p. 306; 1934, p. 302.
3. BA, R45II/64, DVP Reichsgeschäftsstelle, Frauenrundschau, 13 January, 1932, "Erwerbslosenhilfe durch freiwilligen Arbeitsdienst", p. 1103.
4. This is described in detail in Hans Freising, "Entstehung und Aufbau des Arbeitsdienstes im Deutschen Reich", doctoral dissertation for Rostock University, 1937, pp. 21-32. See also P. W. van den Nieuwenhuysen, De Nationaalsocialistische Arbeidsdienst, Louvain, 1939, pp. 26-27.
5. Toni Saring, Die Deutsche Frauenarbeitsdienst, Berlin, 1934, pp. 74-75.

was paying subsistence wages to 25 unemployed girls, who were brought together to make and repair garments for needy citizens¹. All these activities were completely voluntary; the Nazis attacked them because they favoured a compulsory system², the Communists and radical feminists because they saw Labour Service as exploiting women and girls, particularly, and as a potential strike-breaking weapon³. But most other parties and groups - including the Churches - supported the Labour Service, in the hope of alleviating the misery of the unemployed⁴.

It was partly the failure of the democratic parties and of the more authoritarian governments in the early 1930s to find a way out of the crisis into which Germany had sunk that provided the opportunity for Hitler to form a government at the end of January 1933. Thus he became responsible for solving the economic problems of the country. But, although it seemed as if some measure of success in this area would be essential if he was to retain power, and if he was to be able to pursue the aggressive foreign policy which was his basic aim, the introduction of a vigorous economic policy was not his first priority. He was determined to consolidate his political power

1. IfZ, MA 422, frame 5-455891, Deutscher Arbeitsdienst, "Mädels im Arbeitsdienst", April 1932.
2. BA, Slg.Sch., 262, Reichsleitung "Rundschreiben Nr. 14a", 5 October, 1932.
3. BA, R58/ , RMdI/NsdL, 17 March, 1932, "Kampf der Arbeitsdienstpflicht", p. 20.
BA, R45IV/vorl. 10, RGO Reports, October 1932, "Frauen im 'freiwilligen' Arbeitsdienst", p. 8.
"Zwangsarbeit für Frauen", FiS, December 1932, p. 6.
4. Wolfgang Benz, "Vom freiwilligen Arbeitsdienst zur Arbeitsdienstpflicht", VjFZ, 1968, pp. 323, 326-27.

first and attempt to deal with economic problems once he felt politically secure. He was fortunate in two respects: from January into the summer there is a general seasonal improvement in unemployment figures; and, as was not yet fully apparent, the depression had reached its nadir before the end of 1932, and an upturn had begun before his Government took office. These two factors, combined with loud and optimistic propaganda, gave the impression that Hitler's Government was at last bringing recovery to Germany, when all it had done was to continue the piecemeal work-creation projects of the previous administrations. But at last on 1 June, 1933, the "Law for the Reduction of Unemployment" was passed; this included measures which seemed to reflect the Nazi view of the place of women in society¹.

It was a fundamental part of the Nazi Weltanschauung that the man was the guardian of and provider for the home and family; an unemployed man, however, would be unlikely to be able to fulfil this function. If he were married, a man might be put in the degrading position of having his wife support him, and possibly a family in addition, on the meagre wage she could earn; if he were single, he could not afford to marry and have children². Either way, severe unemployment was a major obstacle to a healthy rate of population growth. In addition, the increased employment of women, sometimes at

1. "Gesetz zur Verminderung der Arbeitslosigkeit", RGB, 1933 I, 1 June, 1933, pp. 323-27.

2. Engelbert Huber, Das ist Nationalsozialismus, Stuttgart, pp. 123-24.

Friedrich Lenz, "Arbeitslosigkeit und Rassenhygiene", VB, 25/26 June, 1933.

the expense of men, was driving women into occupations which, in the view of a Social Democrat like Judith Grünfeld, as well as in the Nazi view, were unsuitable for them¹. To remedy these problems, women would have to be taken out of heavy industry, to protect them physiologically - or, as the Nazis preferred to say, "biologically" - since they were the actual or potential mothers of the nation². For this reason, young girls were a source of particular concern, as they had been to doctors and factory social workers for some years³. The Nazis promoted the desirability of farm work and domestic service for girls because they hoped to provide cheap labour in areas which were now unpopular with women; but it was as high a consideration that this kind of work would be much less damaging to adolescent girls than work in a tobacco or chemicals factory.

The Nazis' intention was not, as was often claimed⁴, to remove women completely from the labour market. They did aim to persuade married women to leave work, to devote their full attention to their family, or to start a family if they were childless or add to it if they had followed the post-war pattern of a one or two-child family. This would, they believed, create a situation in which single women could be found work in occupations suited to the female physique and the feminine nature. The number of these women, was, however,

1. Judith Grünfeld, op. cit., pp. 913-21.
2. "Nachprüfung der industriellen Frauenarbeit", VB, 7 February, 1934.
3. See above p. 116.
4. See e.g. Hilda Browning, Women under Fascism and Communism, London, 1935, pp. 8-9. M. Lode, "Women under Hitler's Yoke", The Communist International, November 1938, pp. 42-43. This article was kindly pointed out to me by Professor V. G. Kiernan.

expected to be greatly reduced by the fact that the job security afforded to men by the withdrawal of married women from work would enable and encourage more single men to marry¹. But the Nazis did not oppose the employment of women root and branch; in fact, they firmly believed that women had an essential role to play in social work of every kind, particularly nursing, primary teaching and welfare services². In addition, Hitler had recognised that women would continue to be the comrades of men in the factory and the office, so that it is clear that the Nazis did not aim to eliminate women from those white-collar and even manual jobs which caused no harm to the female frame. When there were enough jobs to go round, there would no longer be the unseemly rivalry for positions which had characterised the post-war period, and which disturbed the harmony of the nation³.

It was this situation which the law of 1 June, 1933, set out to achieve. It provided, in the first place, considerable sums of money to be spent on public works, and, in addition, introduced some rather dubious expedients, including work-sharing and the use of manpower for work previously done by machines⁴. Then there were two provisions

1. WuS, 1935, no. 13, special supplement "Beschäftigung, Arbeitszeit und Arbeitseinkommen", p. 8, "Die Anteil der Frauenarbeit in der Industrie".

2. Paula Siber, Die Frauenfrage und ihre Lösung durch den Nationalsozialismus, Berlin, 1933, pp. 26-27.

3. Huber, op. cit., p. 123.

4. RGB, op. cit., p. 323.

See also Mason, op. cit., pp. 141, 148-49, for a discussion of these expedients.

which specifically affected women: in the first place, a tax concession was announced for those who employed a female domestic servant¹. This dealt with a genuine problem, since in the contracted economy there had been severe unemployment among domestic servants². But there had also been a voluntary exodus of women from this kind of work since the war, in favour of jobs which were less restricting and better paid³, and it was to try to reverse this trend, since domestic work was deemed particularly suitable for women by the Nazis, that the measure was partly geared. Above all, perhaps, work done by maidservants was not, on the whole, work that a man would expect, or would be expected, to do, and so domestic service could provide jobs for women without taking them away from men.

The other section of the law which had special relevance to women was headed "Promotion of marriages", and dealt chiefly with the marriage-loan scheme⁴. From the employment point of view, the important feature was that it was a condition of receiving a loan that the bride-to-be had held paid employment for at least six months out of the two years preceding the passage of the law - that is, in the depths of the crisis - and that she now undertake to relinquish her job on marriage; in addition, she was not to resume employment

1. RGB, op. cit., p. 326.

2. BA, Nachlass Gothein, Georg Gothein, "Streifleichter der Arbeitslosigkeit", Deutsche Wirtschafts-Zeitung, 15 October, 1931, p. 987.

3. Otto Michalke, "Die Frauenarbeit", Jahrbücher für Nationalökonomie und Statistik, 1935, p. 437.

4. For the population aspects of the marriage-loan scheme, see chapter 2, pp. 51-56.

until the loan was repaid, unless her husband's income fell below a certain low level. In recognition of the essential part played in family concerns, particularly in agriculture, by wives as "assisting family members", this category of employment was not counted as falling within the provisions of the law¹; this meant, however, that families living on the land and depending on the labour of the wife would not benefit from the marriage-loan scheme, which was hardly in line with the Nazis' obsession with encouraging the growth of a healthy "peasant" class. But it was consistent with the Nazi view that agriculture, like domestic service, was a particularly suitable area of employment for women.

The scope of the scheme was soon extended, to include those who had married in the year before the publication of the law, if the wife had been working for at least six months and was now prepared to retire. In addition, the period during which the wife had worked was now to fall between 1 June, 1928, and the date of the marriage, thus bringing in the entire period of the depression, and much of the recession before it². Thus it was clear that the encouraging of married women to give up work was a major priority in this law, of perhaps less long-term significance than the population aims behind the marriage-loan scheme, but certainly of pressing importance in mid-1933. The general idea behind the scheme was not a new one; the giving of an attractive lump sum as severance payment to married women to give up work, particularly in the public service, had been

1. RGB, op. cit., pp. 326-27.

2. "Zweite Durchführungsverordnung über die Gewährung von Ehestandsdarlehen", RGB, 1933 I, 26 July, 1933, p. 540.

suggested in the early 1920s, and such a sum had been prescribed in the law passed by the Brüning Government in 1932 to permit the dismissal of married women civil servants under certain conditions¹. The marriage-loan scheme, however, had a much wider application, and was intended to serve several purposes at once - increasing the number of marriages, raising the birth rate, freeing jobs for men, giving orders to factories producing the household goods on which the loan had to be spent - and gave the impression of being an incentive rather than a bribe.

Minor modifications were made to the marriage-loan laws during the remainder of 1933 and in 1934. It was, for example, stipulated that the Minister of Finance should be able in exceptional cases to authorise the granting of a loan even if the applicant had not complied with all the provisions of the original act; this provided the loop-hole which the Nazis so often allowed themselves in seemingly categorical regulations. At the same time, the loan scheme was made applicable in the case of "assisting family members", where the wife who gave up work was replaced by someone to whom a full wage was paid². This was sensible from the points of view of both employment and population policy, but it was unlikely that many people would be

1. BA, R2/1291, letter from the Württemberg Minister of Finance to the Reich Minister of Finance, 31 March, 1923; letter from the Verein Deutscher Evangelischer Lehrerinnen to the Reich Minister of Finance, 7 June, 1923.

"Gesetz über die Rechtsstellung der weiblichen Beamten", RGB, 1932 I, 30 May, 1932, pp. 245-46. This is dealt with in detail in chapter 5.

2. "Dritte Durchführungsverordnung über die Gewährung von Ehestandsdarlehen", RGB, 1933 I, 22 August, 1933, p. 596.

affected, since it would almost always be more expensive to hire paid labour in place of a wife who did not receive a wage as such. But this measure was included no doubt merely to make it possible for the rural population, particularly, to be brought into the scheme somehow, and to find even a few positions for unemployed persons. It was not, however, stipulated that these persons must be male, so that there was the possibility of an unemployed woman benefiting from the withdrawal of a wife from work. The situation clearly was still desperate in winter 1933-34, with another amendment stating that a husband had to be indigent, not merely poorly paid, before a wife in a loan-aided marriage was entitled to take a job¹.

Explaining the marriage-loan scheme, the Völkischer Beobachter was completely open about the fact that "in the campaign against unemployment one of the most important tasks of our economic policy is to send women back to the home from the work-place", adding the qualification "wherever that is suitable". The paper went on to report what it saw as the shining example of the Reemtsma cigarette company which was supporting the purpose of the marriage-loan scheme by replacing the women who retired by men, and, in addition, was making the scheme even more attractive by giving every female employee who entered it a substantial cash payment. By November 1933 one hundred and twenty-two women workers had already benefited from this offer by giving up work to marry, and these had carried their celebrations to the incredible length of having a huge combined wedding ceremony! The Völkischer Beobachter found this entire episode thoroughly admirable,

1. "Gesetz zur Änderung des Gesetzes über die Förderung der Eheschliessungen", RGB, 1934 I, 28 March, 1934, p. 253.

and expressed the expectation that other employers would emulate Reemtsma before long¹. This was precisely the kind of "spontaneous" activity which the Nazis encouraged, so that an objective which they saw as important could be achieved by money contributed privately, thus saving the Government expense. At any rate, it seems that by the end of 1934 some 360,000 women had given up work as a result of receiving a loan², and if this was a reasonably pleasing outcome for the Government, it cannot be doubted that many women were glad to be able to give up their job, in return for official approval and financial benefit.

The marriage-loan scheme could not, of course, bring about the elimination of all, or even most, married women from employment, since only those who had married since June 1932 were eligible for it. To deal with the remainder, it must have been eagerly anticipated by some, just as it was feared by others, that the Nazi-led Government would take the earliest opportunity to legislate against the Doppelverdiener, the Party having been active in the campaign against her before 1933. But the only measure passed in this area was the law of 30 June, 1933, which extended the Brüning law of 30 May, 1932, and thus allowed for the dismissal of married women from the civil service

1. "Die Frau in den Haushalt, der Mann an die Arbeitsstätte", VB, 1 November, 1933.
2. In the last four months of 1933, when the loan scheme was operative, 141,559 loans were made; in 1934 the figure was 224,619. Only very few of these can have been made without the wife's having to leave work. Figures from St.J., 1936, p. 42.

on a larger scale¹.

Nevertheless, the general attitude of the Government to the Doppelverdiener was hostile, and this encouraged some employers and authorities to demonstrate their loyalty to the new regime by dismissing married women. The Government, however, soon discovered that these local initiatives were having undesirable effects; in the first place, they were causing considerable unrest among employees in the concerns affected, and, in addition, the result was by no means always in the interests of the families they were supposed to benefit. To try to clarify the position, the Minister of Employment issued instructions in November 1933 which explained that the campaign against the working married woman had so far shown that a lack of discrimination could be detrimental to productivity since "it is actually often the best and most industrious people who try, by bringing a second income into a home, and by extra effort, to provide a higher standard of living for themselves or a better education for their children". Preventing those who were eager to work hard for certain objectives from doing so turned out, it was admitted, in many cases to be counter-productive, and so in future careful consideration would have to be given to each individual case².

Faced with the chance to take real action against the

1. "Gesetz zur Änderung von Vorschriften auf dem Gebiet des allgemeinen Beamten-, des Besoldungs- und des Versorgungsrechts", RGB, 1933 I, 30 June, 1933, pp. 434-35. This will be discussed in detail in chapter 5.
2. Report in AfB, March 1934, pp. 125-26.

See also Mason, op. cit., pp. 146 and 146A.

Doppelverdiener, action which the last governments before Hitler's had been unwilling, but probably also impotent, to take, the Nazis discovered that what the apologists of the working married woman had maintained was true, namely that an intensive campaign against the employment of married women would not solve Germany's economic problems, and also that most of the married women who worked did so out of necessity. The term Doppelverdiener, which had been so widely used in the years 1930-33, almost exclusively in a pejorative sense, is still to be found in use in 1934, but to a rapidly decreasing extent; after 1934, it was used only to describe something which had existed in the past. The Government might maintain that this was because the problem had been eliminated by decisive action; the reality was that the Government discovered that this problem was very largely a red herring.

Although it had taken little direct action to remove women from the productive process, by 1935 the Government seemed, at first sight, to have achieved its aim of discriminating in favour of men.

An official publication confidently asserted that,

"since the assumption of power, women's employment has once again been reduced. The decisive factor in this has been above all the fundamental nature of National Socialist population policy".

In new appointments, continued the article, men had been given preference, while the Employment Exchanges had been particularly at pains to find work for family men, and then to help single men, to give them the chance to marry and start a family¹.

Other tactics included the banning of women from certain categories of heavy work, for example in any kind of work underground,

1. WuS, loc. cit.

in mining, salt-works, and coking plants¹, in rolling-mills or foundries². If these were not areas in which women might be expected to be found, it was the employment of women for the first time in such concerns in the 1920s which had caused concern to Social Democrats³, for example, and which was justified only by the extremists of the Open Door International. In other industries, for example in brick-works, shoe-making, and certain areas of the glass industry, the introduction of equal pay for women was intended to discourage employers from taking on women, when men were actually better suited to the work⁴. But equal pay for women was not an end in itself, and it was introduced in only a small minority of cases where it was felt that women had been used as labour only because they could be paid at a lower rate than men.

The result of these measures indeed appeared to be a reduction in the employment of women. Official figures showed that whereas in the first three months of 1933 women's proportion in the industrial labour force had been around 30%, there had been a decline to 25.5% for the last four months of 1934. But this was not a true reflection of the overall situation: it had to be admitted - albeit with a singular lack of emphasis - that in absolute terms the number of women in industry had actually risen by 300,000 in the same period, to a

1. "Arbeitszeitordnung", RGB, 1934 I, 26 July, 1934, pp. 807-12.
2. "Verordnung über den Schutz der jugendlichen Arbeiter und der Arbeiterinnen im Steinkohlenbergbau, in Walz- und Hammerwerken und in der Glasindustrie", RGB, 1935 I, 12 March, 1935, p. 387.
3. Judith Grünfeld, op. cit., p. 921.
4. "The Law and Women's Work", ILO Studies and Reports, Series I, no. 4, p. 402.

total of 1.4 million¹. Thus, far from achieving its stated aim of cutting drastically the size of the female labour force, the Nazi Government had not been able, apparently, to prevent there being a net rise in it. The reason behind this is obvious: the real remedy for the massive unemployment of the early 1930s was the creation of more jobs, not the provision of work for some people at the expense of others, nor widespread work-sharing, the expedients to which the Nazis turned at the start.

Men had perhaps found job opportunities less available because of female competition, but the crucial factor in the depression was that it was the traditional strongholds of men's employment which had been most catastrophically hit by the crisis. To achieve a genuine improvement in men's employment prospects, these areas, in the production goods industries, had to be revived; and this process was also a vital part of Nazi aims in foreign policy, which would require not only a return to pre-depression capacity in heavy industry, but a considerable expansion of it beyond that. Thus, the decisive factor affecting women's proportion in the labour force was not the few measures designed to encourage them to leave work, to make way for men, but rather the entire direction of the Government's work-creation programme, whose purpose was to raise production in the capital goods

1. WuS, loc. cit.

By remarking that the effect of the Nazis' various measures was a "drastic reduction in the percentage of women employed", without noting the rise in absolute terms of the number of women employed, and without taking into consideration the way in which men had fared worse in the depression than women, Mason (op. cit., p. 144) appears to miss the point at issue.

industries; this would have the effect of creating new jobs for men, and would therefore not work to the disadvantage of women.

Women would continue to be employed in those consumer goods industries where they had traditionally had a substantial representation, although the restricting of domestic demand would prevent expansion of these on a scale comparable with the expansion urgently planned for the capital goods industries. But it is obvious that the return of men to employment would lead to a lowering of women's share in industry as a whole, restoring the balance which had been so distorted in women's favour by the unnatural circumstances of the depression. And yet, in the first two years of Nazi rule, women's unemployment was reduced at a rate similar to that of men's, so that by the end of May 1935 93% of available women employees had jobs, the comparable figure for men being 88%. It was estimated that, just as the progress made since the 1870s had depended on the participation of women in industry, so any further expansion of the economy would not be possible unless the remaining reserve of female labour was tapped, for industry and business as well as for agriculture and domestic service¹.

C. The Organisation and Welfare of the Woman Worker in the Third Reich

Official recognition was given to the vital role of women in the economy in July 1934, when a Women's Section was established within the German Labour Front. In keeping with the Party's favoured policy of the personal union of leadership functions within a given area², Ley appointed Gertrud Scholtz-Klink, the National

1. Michalke, op. cit., pp. 439-42.

2. Friedrich Lampe, Die Amtsträger der Partei, Stuttgart and Berlin, 1941, pp. 107-11.

Women's Leader in the Party, as head of this section¹. The Government thus acknowledged that the millions of women in employment of various kinds were there to stay, and that, therefore, adequate attention would have to be paid to their special needs - in the national interest at least as much as for their own sake. Moreover, the creation of the Women's Section of the Labour Front was entirely in keeping with Nazi theory that the sexes had separate needs and separate functions, and should therefore be segregated for most purposes. That a similar process of creating separate sections for women in each of the professional associations was taking place at about this time² suggests that acceptance of women in employment at all levels was reached at about the same time, and also that the consolidation of Nazi power was sufficiently advanced to permit the regime to embark on its long-term social policies by the summer of 1934.

The Women's Section of the Labour Front was not intended to be a women's organisation: the NS-Frauenschaft and the Deutsches Frauenwerk served that purpose, and it was made clear that no challenge to their monopoly position would be tolerated³. The Section was rather a department of the Labour Front, without members of its own, but responsible for the welfare - and indoctrination - of women

1. BA, Slg.Sch., 230, "Einrichtung eines Frauenamtes in der DAF", order by Robert Ley, 12 July, 1934.

2. Details of this are given in chapter 5.

3. For a fuller discussion of this, see chapter 6.

who were members of the Labour Front¹. Thus, the Section was to forge the closest possible ties with the Frauenschaft, so that the same relationship existed between the two as existed between the Labour Front and the NSDAP. While working women were therefore to belong to an organisation which was under male leadership and the majority of whose members were men, they were to be constantly reminded that they were women first and employees second. Frau Scholtz-Klink believed that this policy could be effective only if the officials of the Women's Section were members of the Frauenschaft, and if the Frauenschaft had a share in the appointment of these officials. In addition, it seemed imperative that co-operation at the national level be complemented by a close relationship in Gau, Kreis and Ortsgruppe². On the other hand, as Frau Scholtz-Klink's chief spokeswoman on Labour Front affairs, Alice Rilke, pointed out, women should be represented in the full Labour Front organisation whenever matters concerning women were under discussion, again at the national and local levels, and women representatives were to visit factories and offices to see for themselves the conditions in which women worked³.

The Women's Section of the Labour Front required a large staff, if it was to fulfil its responsibilities to the seven million women - all employed women apart from "assisting family members" - who came

1. Alice Rilke, "Frauenerwerbstätigkeit im neuen Deutschland", FK, January 1937, p. 12.
2. BA, Slg.Sch., 230, "Frauenamt der DAF und NS-Frauenschaft", order by Gertrud Scholtz-Klink, no. 9/35, 17 August, 1935.
3. Alice Rilke, op. cit., p. 11.

within its jurisdiction¹. By 1938 it had indeed built up a formidable network, with 291 women - fifty-two of them full-time - in the Gau offices, 643 in the Kreis offices, and 9,073 in Ortsgruppe units. These were the administrators; in addition, there were 47,870 women representatives of the Section throughout the individual factories and businesses, and 1,000 factory social workers, including 200 trainees; together, these last two figures constituted a four-fold increase over the pre-1933 figures². Thus employment was provided for a number of women in an area approved by the Government, and a degree of control and surveillance was maintained over the female work-force.

The factory social workers were expected to fulfil a wide variety of functions: they acted in an advisory capacity to the management and the Council of Trustees in the matter of the general welfare of employees; they were counsellors in disputes between individual workers and for those who had personal problems; and they were also to be consulted about the employment or dismissal of female employees. In particular, they had the task of supervising the maintenance of a high standard of hygiene in factories. To familiarise them with the position of working women, factory social workers were required to spend a period working on the shop-floor; this was in addition to their having obtained a qualification in social work, having performed Labour Service, and having attended a training camp run by the Women's Section. There was one further

1. BA, op. cit., "Die Aufgaben des Frauenamtes der DAF", Der Führerorden, 15 November, 1935.

2. Ibid., "Reichsfrauenführung Jahresbericht 1938", p. VIII.

requirement: "Naturally", stressed the official literature on the subject, "for such vital work a commitment to National Socialism...is essential". Any possibility of organised unrest among women workers was eliminated by the device of appointing this "politically reliable" factory social worker - who was subordinate to the Women's Section and instructed to co-operate with management - to the post of shop steward, in which capacity she was supposed to act as sole representative of the female work-force in any dealings with the management, the Trustees of Labour, and the Women's Section of the Labour Front¹.

In addition to this vital function, as the Nazis saw it, of creating harmony between capital and labour - or, more accurately, a docile labour force - under the direction of the State, the Women's Section had four main tasks to fulfil. Frau Scholtz-Klink characterised these as social welfare for employed women, protection of their child-bearing capacity at work, the evolving of more comprehensive labour legislation, and the provision of courses in practical housekeeping for women and girls who had worked since leaving school, to give them basic knowledge of and experience in the running of a home². This last task was seen as particularly important since the Nazis claimed that proficiency in domestic duties had been undervalued in the post-war period, with the result that women were finding themselves with a home to run and little idea of how to do it. As was often the case with their claims and boasts, there was a grain of truth in this. Accordingly, working women were encouraged to take

1. Ibid., Der Führerorden, loc. cit.

2. "Vier Jahre Einsatz für die schaffende deutsche Frau in Fabrik und Büro", VB, 14 May, 1937.

part in the courses in domestic science and child-care devised by the Frauenwerk. Although the fees for the course were waived for women who paid membership dues to the Labour Front, the women nevertheless had to attend the courses in their free time; it is therefore perhaps surprising that by 1937 as many as 600,000 working women were estimated to have attended a course¹. Although this figure represented rather less than 10% of working women, it seems reasonably successful, given that there was no real incentive and no coercion, but only a barrage of propaganda in favour of attendance at the courses.

The three other major tasks of the Women's Section were broadly concerned with the health and welfare of the working woman. There was collaboration with the NSV to ensure that pregnant women were given adequate care at work and that a woman's financial position was secure around the time of her confinement. Naturally, the interests of individual women were here purely incidental to the top priority of ensuring that working women would bear healthy children. This preoccupation was also at the root of other measures which undoubtedly brought benefit to individuals; for example, women were encouraged to avail themselves of the recreational facilities of the Labour Front's "Strength through Joy" section². Some women were afforded extra paid holidays because students, in vacation, and Frauenschaft members who were not themselves employed volunteered for

1. BA, loc. cit.,

2. BA, loc. cit.

"Frauencongress am Nürnberg: Frau Scholtz-Klink über die Frau im Beruf", FZ, 15 September, 1935.

Alice Rilke, loc. cit.

unpaid factory work for this purpose. In fact, between March 1935 and the end of 1938 6001 women were replaced by 5063 volunteers, who provided 86,072 extra days of paid leave¹. These rather unimpressive figures - less than 1% of working women benefited here - suggest that for once the Nazis were using the term "voluntary" correctly. Nevertheless, the venture was seen as a useful propaganda weapon, which was said to illustrate the new community spirit that had developed in Germany since 1933, after the deep divisions of the 1920s; and it had the additional virtue of costing the Government nothing.

The Women's Section of the Labour Front claimed to be tackling the vexed problem of removing women from unsuitable, damaging work. Indeed, its representatives sent in reports about conditions at work, and would sometimes propose measures to remedy shortcomings. But this tended to reflect local problems which were difficult to cope with in a rational way by a strictly centralised organisation. There was, for example, a suggestion from a district welfare officer in Lahr, on the Rhine, that needy pregnant women workers in the local cigar factory should be given a supplement to help them to refrain from work until their child was six months old, for the sake of both mother and child².

But the Government preferred to concentrate on working out broad measures which would have a beneficial effect throughout the country, and it produced a fairly creditable list of laws to deal with some of the worst problems. As early as July 1934 a law

1. BA, op. cit., "Reichsfrauenführung Jahresbericht 1938", p. VIII.

2. BA, R2/18554, letter from Marie Stoess to the Ministry of Finance, 27 September, 1935.

restricting the number of hours women might work, specifying the amount of overtime they might do under special circumstances, and completely banning night work for women in medium-sized and large concerns after 10 p.m., was passed¹. Women were banned from the most arduous kinds of work in a variety of industries, laws being passed in 1937, for example, restricting their employment in pottery and confectionery manufacture to light work which would not impose an unhealthy strain on them. And plans were afoot to try to ensure that women did not do potentially damaging work in home industry². Further piecemeal legislation was enacted throughout the 1930s³, but it was all regarded as an interim solution only, until the Government could achieve its aim of drawing up a comprehensive Maternity Protection Law⁴. This was finally done in war-time, when the need to bring as many women as possible into industry was already vitiating the effectiveness of existing legislation⁵. The Maternity

1. "Arbeitszeitordnung", RGB, 1934 I, 26 July, 1934, pp. 807-12.

2. BA, R22/2073, Generalakten des Justizministeriums, "Neue Sozialgesetze in Vorbereitung", 3 June, 1937.

3. For example, "Ausführungsverordnung zur Arbeitszeitordnung", RGB, 1938 I, 12 December, 1938, pp. 1800-01.
 "Glashüttenverordnung", RGB, 1938 I, 23 December, 1938, pp. 1961-65.
 "The Law and Women's Work", ILO Studies and Reports, Series I, no. 4, pp. 294-96, lists a number of measures.

4. BA, op. cit., letter from Wever at the Ministry of Finance to the Reich Ministers etc., 17 November, 1938.

5. "The Employment of Women Workers during the War", ILR, 1939, vol. 40, p. 802.

Provision had been made in advance for the suspension of labour protection measures for women in the event of war, IfZ, MA 468, frame 5723, "Arbeitseinsatz im Kriege", 2 February, 1937.

Protection Law, which came into force on 1 July, 1942, in a modified form to meet the exigencies of war, was designed to protect not only pregnant women and nursing mothers, but all working women; the Government intended to amend and extend it substantially after the war¹.

How much real influence the Women's Section of the Labour Front had is hard to judge. It would probably be fair to say that its effectiveness lay in the control it could exert over the female work-force, chiefly in the negative sense of preventing industrial unrest. Its influence in policy-making was, however, negligible. Indeed women benefited from protective legislation and from improved hygiene and welfare at work, but this happened because it was an integral part of the Government's population policy, not because of the success of pressure from representatives of the Women's Section. Their ineffectiveness is illustrated by their failure to achieve a narrowing of wage differentials between the sexes², although from 1935 they claimed to be campaigning for equal pay for equal work³. Such equalisation of wages as there was came

1. BA, op. cit., "Entwurf: Gesetz zum Schutze der arbeitenden Mutter (Mutterschutzgesetz)", 1940 (exact date not given). A second draft was produced on 23 February, 1941, and the law finally passed on 17 May, 1942.

Martha Moers, Der Fraueneinsatz in der Industrie, Berlin, 1943, p. 144.

2. Bry, op. cit., pp. 100-01, 247, shows that throughout the Nazi period wage differentials remained very much what they had been in the Weimar period. For these, see above, p. 123.

"Indexziffern der Arbeitsverdienste", WuS, 1940, no. 18, p. 433, and St.J., 1941/42, p. 390, give illustrative figures.

3. "Das Frauenamt der DAF", Deutsches Frauenschaffen, 1938, p. 50.

about precisely to remove women from unsuitable employment¹. With its desire to limit wage rises as far as possible, and with, in addition, the lower priority accorded to the consumer goods sector, in which women chiefly figured, the Government had no intention of restructuring wages². It would, after all, be an expensive business, since not even a Nazi Government would have tried to lower men's wages to achieve equal pay, particularly in time of full employment, in the later 1930s. The only alternative was to raise women's wages, and the Government would not contemplate that.

D. Attempts to Attract Female Labour, before the Second World War

When Hitler's Government actively began to prepare for the eventuality of war in the foreseeable future, in 1935-36, there was a rapid transition from a programme of job creation to attempts to tap every possible source of labour, for it quickly became clear that the most pressing problem would be a shortage of labour where there had so recently been mass unemployment. Therefore the reintroduction of conscription and the stepping up of rearmament openly and on a massive scale from March 1935 were supplemented by the National Service Law of May 1935. This provided that in time of war there should be the conscription into war industry and essential services of all men aged between fifteen and sixty-five who were not called up for military service, and of all women in the same age-group who neither had children under fifteen to look after nor were pregnant. This was intended to be the legal basis for making every

1. See above, p. 144.

2. "Die Frauenlohn im Kriege", FZ, 20 March, 1940.

effort to ensure that armaments and food supplies were produced on a large enough scale once vast numbers of men had been transferred from their civilian occupations into the armed forces¹.

The Government was well aware, however, that the provisions of the National Service Law would by no means solve all the problems caused by massive conscription into the armed forces. In a report made in February 1937, a senior civil servant named Nolte drew attention to the fact that in the Great War all belligerent countries had experienced a drop in productivity, Germany's being of the order of 20%. This, he contended, was primarily because men who were accustomed to certain jobs had had to be replaced by people - often women - who were totally unfamiliar with them, and often quite unsuited to them. With women only marginally represented during the 1930s in those industries vital to the waging of a war, Nolte predicted that Germany would experience similar difficulties in a future war, unless action was taken at once. Investigations were already under way, he said, to ascertain which industries would provide real employment possibilities for women once men had been withdrawn; this would be facilitated by the temporary lifting of restrictions on the employment of women in heavy industry, in cases where it seemed to be in the national interest. But Nolte also sounded a note of caution, pointing out that, as in the Great War, it would no doubt

1. IfZ, op. cit., frame 5719, "Arbeitseinsatz im Kriege", 2 February, 1937.

emerge that many of the women available for work had little experience of employment, and would be unlikely to make a really valuable contribution to a war-effort¹. It was largely with this problem in mind that the Government was to try its utmost, particularly from 1938, to persuade as many women as possible to enter employment, and particularly to find jobs in areas which had hitherto been exclusively or predominantly male preserves.

One useful indicator of the employment situation was the attitude of the Government to the granting of marriage loans. The condition that the wife or fiancée must give up her job to be eligible for a loan had been applied strictly in time of high unemployment; but what would happen to this condition - claimed to be partly ideological - when the problem was one of full employment? Sure enough, the first slackening of the rule came in summer 1936, shortly before the formulation of the Four Year Plan: at the end of July the Finance Minister was empowered to allow the wife in a loan-aided marriage in exceptional cases to take a job even if her husband was not indigent². Six months later, Reinhardt signed an order to the effect that the wives of men who were performing Labour Service or military service, or who were still studying, should count as exceptions automatically under the previous ruling³.

This move was welcomed gleefully by the editors of Die Frau,

1. IfZ, op. cit., frames 5719-23.
2. "Sechste Durchführungsverordnung über die Gewährung von Ehestandsdarlehen", RGB, 1936 I, 28 July, 1936, p. 576.
3. "Wiederbeschäftigung von Empfängerinnen von Ehestandsdarlehen", RAB, 1937 I, no. 4, 19 January, 1937, p. 24.

who insisted on seeing it purely in terms of a restoration of women's freedom to work, in certain cases, regardless of their marriage loan¹. Reinhardt's purpose was far more pragmatic: in March 1936 it had been ruled that the wives of men in the Labour Service or the armed forces were eligible for an allowance if they were unable to support themselves²; clearly, an anomaly existed whereby women in loan-aided marriages might be unable to support themselves because of a legal restriction, and not necessarily because of their family commitments. The Government might, then, be in the curious position of paying some women twice for not working, even if they were able and willing and, in 1936, at a time when there were job vacancies for them; Reinhardt's order thus saved the Government money on the one hand and provided labour on the other.

But the real change came in November 1937, in a law made retroactive to 1 October, 1937, which amended all previous enactments on the subject of marriage loans. It reaffirmed the proviso that the future wife must have held a job for at least nine months out of the two years preceding the application for the loan. But no mention was made of the need for the wife to give up her job to be eligible for a loan³. The result was that it now became a condition of receiving a loan that the woman had worked for a substantial period

1. "Frauenarbeit trotz Ehestandsdarlehen", Die Frau, May 1937, p. 463.

2. "Familienunterstützungsgesetz", RGB, 1936 I, 30 March, 1936, p. 327.

3. "Drittes Gesetz zur Änderung des Gesetzes über die Förderung der Eheschliessungen", RGB, 1937 I, 3 November, 1937, pp. 1158-59.

since autumn 1935, when the unemployment problem was practically solved. This was a neat way of completely reversing the purpose of the marriage-loan scheme at a time when labour was becoming scarce, for those seeking a loan would now have to ensure that the woman took up employment for nine months if she was not already working. The scheme had apparently served its initial purpose well enough; by the end of 1937 878,016 loans had been made¹, so that at least three-quarters of a million women must have given up work. But it cannot be doubted that a substantial number of these women would have married and given up work - to start a family - even if there had not been a marriage-loan scheme, so that its real effect is difficult to gauge.

Even with the shortage of labour becoming a source of anxiety by the end of 1937, the Government was determined, so the Völkischer Beobachter reported, not to permit young girls of fourteen or fifteen to go straight from school into a factory, for biological reasons². Here, it seemed, the Nazis were not prepared to sacrifice a vital principle to growing necessity. There was, however, an ulterior motive. The municipal authorities in Hanover had already, in spring 1936, stipulated that in future girls would have to wait for a year after leaving school before they would be admitted to an apprenticeship in the area; further, preference was to be given at the end of that year to those girls who had in the interim engaged

1. Calculated from figures in St.J.: 1936, p. 42; 1937, p. 44; 1938, p. 48.

2. "Mädel am Arbeitsplatz", VB, 25 December, 1937.

in work within the broad category of domestic science¹. Now, in December 1937, the Labour Front followed this example, advising young girls throughout the country to spend a year between school and first employment in work of a domestic nature, to safeguard their physical development at the crucial age of puberty, and to ensure that they had some experience of the tasks they would encounter when they married².

This still did not tell the whole story. The chief consideration was that the severe unemployment which there had been among domestic servants during the depression had now given way to a shortage which might be at least partly offset by encouraging young girls - the cheapest labour on the market - to spend a year in domestic service; if this became automatic, there would be a constant supply of labour in this area, even if the turnover was rather rapid. The problem had already been highlighted by Reinhardt's partially repealing one of his original measures designed to combat unemployment; the tax relief granted in June 1933 to those who employed a domestic servant was to be restricted to families with young children, who, for reasons of population policy, would continue to receive the rebate. But there was now no reason to provide incentives for single people or childless couples to employ a domestic servant³. The other area which was losing labour in an alarming manner was agriculture⁴;

1. "Lehrstellen für Mädchen erst ein Jahr nach Schulentlassung", FZ, 6 May, 1936.

2. VB, loc. cit.

3. "Beschränkung der Steuerermässigung für Hausangestellte", FZ, 9 October, 1937.

4. Mason, op. cit., discusses this; see particularly pp. 651-54.

this, like the loss to domestic service, was merely a continuation of a trend already strongly evident in the 1920s, but interrupted by the depression¹. Already in May 1937 it had been announced that the employment exchange in the Magdeburg area would maintain a strict control in future to stem the flow of women from work on the land, where they were urgently needed, into serving in the town's cafés².

In industry, at any rate, women's representation was already increasing in the later 1930s, on a voluntary basis: while their share had dropped - although their absolute numbers had at the same time increased - from 29.3% of the industrial labour force in 1933 to 24.7% in 1936, by June 1939, at a time of full male employment, it had again risen to 27.0%. In absolute terms, whereas in both the 1925 and 1933 censuses there had been shown to be almost 11.5 million women in employment altogether, in mid-May 1939 the figure was 12.7 million; this meant that 37% of the German labour force was female even before the outbreak of war³. Thus, the available reserve of women had been partially used up before men were conscripted into the armed forces in large numbers⁴, at a time when the total number of women of working age was falling because of the trend in the birth rate earlier in the century.

1. Michalke, op. cit., p. 437. See above, p. 137.
2. "Weibliche Arbeitskräfte vom Lande (Magdeburg)", FZ, 22 May, 1937.
3. Figures from St.J.: 1933, p. 19; 1939/40, p. 386. And from Statistisches Jahrbuch für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 1959, p. 9.
4. Dietmar Petzina, "Die Mobilisierung deutscher Arbeitskräfte vor und während des Zweiten Weltkrieges", VjhZ, 1970, p. 449, comments on this.

The increase in women's employment in 1939 was largely occasioned by the appearance of women in work in which they had, on the whole, not formerly been found, since the areas which had traditionally had a high proportion of women employees now had a low priority. In particular, women were being drawn into the transport services, whether as clerkesses or ticket-collectors in the railways administration or as conductresses on trams¹. And in June 1939 it was reported that in Bremen, among other cities, women were now being employed to deliver the post². Somewhat sanctimoniously, the Völkischer Beobachter remarked in July 1939 on its pleasure at each manifestation of a changing attitude in those branches of employment where women had hitherto had to struggle against prejudice - prejudice, the paper failed to add, which it had formerly done its utmost to foster. The change in attitude, continued the homily, was for the first time apparent in banking and insurance, where it was now realised that women could be employed in order to release men to enter occupations which only they could do; the implication was that this meant chiefly active service³.

If it was relatively easy to justify the admission of women to work which they had not been accustomed to perform, and to explain the positive enthusiasm now officially accorded to employed women, given the obvious shortage of labour, the encouragement now being

1. "Die Reichsbahn stellt die Frau ein", FZ, 7 April, 1939.

2. Reports in FZ, 18 June, 1939 and 2 July, 1939.

3. Report in FZ, 18 June, 1939.

3. "Einsatzmöglichkeiten für die Frau", VB, 19 July, 1939.

given to married women to take a job was a more sensitive matter. Der Angriff, however, characteristically adopted a direct approach, posing the question in January 1938: "Why are married women working?" Its answer was equally frank, with the explanation that the chief factor of economic significance was the glaring shortage of labour, so that the old campaign against the Doppelverdiener was no longer of any relevance¹. The steep drop in the birth rate from the war years up to the Machtübernahme, explained Dr. Walter Stothfang, a high official in the Ministry of Employment, meant that there would soon be a severe drop in the number of workers available, so that women, both married and single, would have to be brought into employment in larger numbers than ever before².

The Völkischer Beobachter went even further, in October 1938, pointing out that the increase in women's employment had been so steep since 1936, and especially during 1938, that the only reserve of labour left, for further expansion of the economy, was among those married women who were not already employed. The nation now needed the service of middle-class wives, who might have a grown-up family or be childless, and whose day was not fully occupied, especially if they employed a domestic servant. Women would have to take an increasing share in industrial work, but, the paper was quick to add, this would be accompanied by increasing labour and maternity protection measures on grounds of population policy³.

1. "Von uns notiert...: Warum arbeitet die verheiratete Frau?" Der Angriff, 26 January, 1938.

2. Walter Stothfang, "Verstärkung der Frauenarbeit", Der Angriff, 26 August, 1938.

3. "Die Frauenarbeit in der Gesamtwirtschaft", VB, 22 October, 1938.

Alice Rilke, of the Women's Section of the Labour Front, was not, however, prepared to be quite so glib. She felt it a matter of deep concern that married women, and especially mothers, were being drawn into industrial work in ever-increasing numbers, and could see justification for it in the short term only, as a matter of urgent national necessity. It was not that she opposed the employment of women; rather, she believed that the long-term needs of the nation, namely the health of the next generation, necessitated a sensible division of labour between men and women, so that the "hundreds of thousands of women" still involved in work that was too heavy for their physical strength could change places with the equally large number of men who did relatively light work¹. But this solution was rather too facile also, particularly when it was envisaged that in the event of war women would not merely augment the labour of men but in large measure have to replace it altogether.

So great was the desire to attract married women into work that, in spite of the misgivings of many employers, half-day shift-work was recommended by the Government, for those women who were reluctant to commit themselves to full-time employment when they also had a family to look after. The first reports, in the spring of 1939, on this experiment were generally favourable. The benefit felt by the women themselves was stressed: now they had the strength for their two tasks, at home and at work, now those who had changed from full-time to part-time employment were no longer permanently harassed,

1. BA, NSD30/1836, Informationsdienst..., August 1939, Alice Rilke, "Die Frauenberufs- und Erwerbstätigkeit in der Betrachtung des medizinisch-bevölkerungspolitischen Schrifttums", p. 190 (first published in January 1939).

claimed Dr. Ilse Buresch-Riebe in her report. In addition, she said, there was higher productivity among women working a five-hour day than among those who were reduced to exhaustion by the eight-hour day¹.

Seeing enormous possibilities in the half-day system, the Minister of Employment ordered investigations in the summer of 1939 to try to find out how far it could be extended throughout the various branches of the economy². The clothing industry in the neighbourhood of München-Gladbach and Rheydt was one area in which it was claimed, in August 1939, that the experiment of a four-and-a-half hour day had proved a happy one³. It was not only in wage-earning occupations that married women were now found to be in demand; the authorities hoped to persuade married women with secretarial or clerical experience to return to work on at least a part-time basis, and were particularly anxious that those with training in welfare or social work would similarly respond⁴.

Piecemeal local restrictions and official exhortations were not, however, a satisfactory way of ensuring that the labour required for the fulfilment of the Four Year Plan of September 1936 was made available. There would therefore have to be a concerted

1. BA, op. cit., Ilse Buresch-Riebe, "Erfahrungen bei der Beschäftigung von Frauen in Halbtagschicht", p. 190, (first published in April 1939).
2. "Die Halbtagsarbeit für verheiratete Frauen", FZ, 9 July, 1939.
3. "Die Beschäftigung verheirateter Frauen", FZ, 4 August, 1939.
4. Report in Die Frau, June 1939, p. 499.

effort to mobilise every possible reserve of labour, either by persuading those who had chosen not to work to change their mind, or by imposing a degree of compulsion. It was perhaps characteristic of the Nazis that their policy should turn out to be something between these two possibilities - a mixture of considerable persuasion, limited coercion, and eventually also threats of rigorous compulsion. The genuine reluctance of a dictatorial regime to try to force its subjects to bow to its will was based on apprehension, even fear, and not respect; but the result was still the failure to achieve its aim of an adequate supply of labour, even in the early years of the Second World War, while women stayed at home, unwilling to work.

E. Nazi Schemes of Compulsory Service for Girls

One measure of compulsion which had been promised was that "all young Germans of both sexes" would be required to perform six months' Labour Service¹. Brüning's emergency measure had been nationalised in 1933, but its function was intended to be more ideological and educational than economic, although in the first instance it proved useful for alleviating both the unemployment situation and the overcrowding of the universities². While the Labour

1. "Reichsarbeitsdienstgesetz", RGB, 1935 I, 26 June, 1935, pp. 769-71. Unfortunately, limitations of space do not permit the more detailed discussion of the Labour Service which the availability of material makes possible.
2. Benz, op. cit., pp. 333-37; c.f. the propagandist picture in Freising, op. cit., pp. 42-43. More will be said about the last point in Chapter 4.

Service became compulsory for men from October 1935, however, the Women's Labour Service continued as a separate and still voluntary exercise, with some 12,000 girls at a time working in domestic service or agriculture¹. Although administrative changes were made, and target numbers raised repeatedly - to 25,000 in 1937-38, to 30,000 by April 1939 and to 50,000 a year later - the Women's Labour Service remained a much smaller concern than the men's², and was not made compulsory until 4 September, 1939³, when the outbreak of war meant that the girls would now have to replace the men rather than provide additional labour. Hierl, the Labour Service leader, had already made it clear, in a statement which Frick supported, that the purpose of the Labour Service for girls was above all to provide a pool of auxiliary workers for agriculture⁴.

1. BA, Slg.Sch., 262, Karl Pollmann, "Die Reichsanstalt für Arbeitsvermittlung und Arbeitslosenversicherung und der Deutsche Frauenarbeitsdienst", Deutscher Arbeitsdienst, Sonderausgabe: "Der Deutsche Frauenarbeitsdienst", ?summer 1935, p. 3.
2. "7. Verordnung zur Durchführung und Ergänzung des Reichsarbeitsdienstgesetzes (Arbeitsdienst für die weibliche Jugend)", RGB, 1936 I, 15 August, 1936, p. 633.

"Erlass des Führers und Reichskanzlers über die Dauer der Dienstzeit des Reichsarbeitsdienstes und die Stärke des Reichsarbeitsdienstes für die weibliche Jugend", RGB, 1936 I, 26 September, 1936, p. 747.

"Erlass des Führers und Reichskanzlers über die Sommer- und Winterstärke des Reichsarbeitsdienstes und über die Stärke des Arbeitsdienstes für die weibliche Jugend", RGB, 1937 I, 24 November, 1937, p. 1298.

"Erlass des Führers und Reichskanzlers über die Stärke des Arbeitsdienstes für die weibliche Jugend", RGB, 1938 I, 7 September, 1938, p. 1157.
3. "Verordnung über die Durchführung der Reichsarbeitsdienstpflicht für die weibliche Jugend", RGB, 1939 I, 4 September, 1939, p. 1693.
4. "Arbeitsdienstpflicht der weibliche Jugend und Hilfe in der Landwirtschaft", VB, 2 July, 1936.

Thus, well before the outbreak of war the primacy of the "educational" function of the Labour Service was overridden by the desperate need to find labour for agriculture, at a time when the aim was autarchy¹.

The drawback about the Labour Service, as far as the Government was concerned, was that it cost money; girls, like boys, lived a communal life in a camp and wore a uniform, the funds for their subsistence and clothing coming from the Ministry of Finance. Krosigk was less than enthusiastic about the expansion of the Labour Service for this reason². Göring, however, as Plenipotentiary for the Four Year Plan, devised a less expensive tactic which could be applied to a wider group than the 25,000 girls involved in Labour Service at any one time in 1937-38³. On 15 February, 1938, he announced that the Government reserved the right to require all unmarried girls under twenty-five to work for a year in domestic service or agriculture before they would be allowed to enter employment, because of the severe shortage of labour in these areas⁴. There was no attempt

1. On the limitations on autarchy, see Berenice A. Carroll, Design for Total War, The Hague, 1968, p. 103. Chapter VII of this book is devoted to a discussion of the Four Year Plan.

See also Dieter Petzina, Autarkiepolitik im Dritten Reich, Stuttgart, 1968, pp. 197-98.

2. RGB, loc. cit.

BA, R2/4525, letter from Krosigk to Frick, 14 October, 1938.

3. Schoenbaum, op. cit., pp. 192-93, completely confuses the Labour Service for girls with the introduction of this new "Pflichtjahr" (year of compulsory service) for girls. Mason, op. cit., p. 616, n.2, appears to do the same.
4. "Anordnung zur Durchführung des Vierjahresplans über den verstärkten Einsatz von weiblichen Arbeitskräften in der Land- und Hauswirtschaft", 15 February, 1938, Deutscher Reichsanzeiger, no. 43, 21 February, 1938.

to disguise the fact that this was a measure intended purely to fulfil the economic aims of State policy, although Dr. Timm, describing it in the Ministry of Employment's gazette, insisted that it had a deeper significance in that it directed girls into work which was particularly suitable for them in view of their future role as the wives and mothers of Germans¹.

The Minister responsible for the Employment Exchanges made immediate use of Göring's enabling order: on 16 February he announced that it would apply to those girls who first came onto the labour market after 28 February, 1938; those who had already worked were not to be included. In addition, in the first instance the order was to apply only to girls who wanted to work in the textile, clothing or tobacco industries, or in an office, the occupations in which women had traditionally been best represented; in the case of the industries mentioned, there was deliberate discrimination because these were the least important to the Nazi scheme of things. But the applicability of the order was very restricted at this time, particularly given the proviso that girls would be exempt who had performed Labour Service or some other form of agricultural or domestic work for at least a year; this was extended to include work which did not classify as full employment for the purposes of the labour book, performed in the family or with relatives

1. Max Timm, "Das Pflichtjahr für Mädchen", RAB, 1938 II, no. 7, 5 March, 1938, p. 75. I am most grateful to Dr. T. W. Mason for generously sending me a copy of this article.

of the girl, provided that there were four or more young children and that the girl was genuinely helping to look after them¹. No doubt this provided a welcome loop-hole for some who dreaded being sent to work in a strange household.

In order to try to ensure that there was the minimum of evasion of these new provisions, it was also announced that all school-leavers were to present themselves at their local employment exchange within two weeks of leaving school. Failure to comply would result in the imposition of a substantial fine on the legal guardian of a young person who defaulted². It had been estimated that some 140,000 girls, or 30% of those due to leave school in March 1938, had affirmed that they had no desire to take a job or learn a trade, and would probably stay at home, at least at first³. No doubt the prospect of having to do the year of service before employment had confirmed this intention in many. But now all these girls had the duty to register at the employment exchange, so that they would either have to provide badly-needed labour in areas of paid employment where there was a shortage, or resign themselves to a year's work in agriculture or domestic service before taking a job in a less vital area of employment.

The results were, however, disappointing, with most girls

1. "Durchführungsanordnung zur Anordnung über den verstärkten Einsatz von weiblichen Arbeitskräften in der Land- und Hauswirtschaft", 16 February, 1938, Deutscher Reichsanzeiger, op. cit.
2. "Anordnung über die Meldung Schulentlassener", 1 March, 1938, Deutscher Reichsanzeiger, no. 51, 2 March, 1938.
3. "Warum immer neue Forderungen an die Mädchen?" VB, 10 March, 1938.

clearly opting for paid employment of a kind which exempted them from the obligation to perform the year of service, so that at the end of 1938 a new order replaced the original one; this stipulated that all girls who aimed to enter manual or white-collar occupations of any kind would be obliged to engage in the compulsory year, if they had not already performed a year of service voluntarily. There was, however, a lengthy list of exempted occupations, including auxiliary nursing, welfare work and work with small children, as well as a provision that exceptions might also be made at the discretion of employment exchange officials¹. These loop-holes were, however, closed in summer 1939, when it was laid down that all girls under twenty-five were to engage in a year's service in domestic work or on the land, whether they aimed to take a job or not².

Even so, only 188,695 girls were certified to have performed their compulsory year in 1939-40, although the figure for those starting on their year in 1940 was more promising, at 335,972³. The permitting of a number of exempted categories⁴ continued to ensure that the institution of the compulsory year was much less effective than its outward paraphernalia of orders and propaganda suggested.

1. "Durchführungsverordnung zur Anordnung über den verstärkten Einsatz von weiblichen Arbeitskräften in der Land- und Hauswirtschaft" 23 December, 1938, Deutscher Reichsanzeiger, no. 305, 31 December, 1938.
2. "Weibliches Pflichtjahr für alle", Westdeutscher Beobachter, 12 June, 1939.
3. Figures from St.J., 1941/42, p. 420.
4. E.g., "Anrechnung hauswirtschaftlicher Ausbildungen in staatlich anerkannten Lehranstalten auf das Pflichtjahr für Mädchen", RAB, 1940 I, 15 March, 1940, p. 102, and "Pflichtjahr für Mädchen; hier: Befreiung durch Besuch der Berufsfachschule für Hotel- und Gaststättengehilfinnen in Heidelberg", RAB, 1940 I, 25 April, 1940, p. 184.

The result was to leave Germany still with insufficient labour in domestic service and agriculture, which testifies to the skill and ingenuity of girls and their parents in circumventing the new laws. There was also a conflict of interests between two Nazi policies here: the desire to direct unmarried girls under twenty-five into the Labour Service and into the year of service was matched by a preoccupation with encouraging early marriage. It is not inconceivable that the rise in the number of marriages towards the end of 1939 was partly occasioned by some girls' choosing to marry in haste rather than perform service of this kind. At any rate, in summer 1939 the employment exchanges were instructed to allow the employment of domestic servants in childless or small families only if demand had been met in large families; this order was apparently necessitated by the turning down of vacancies in large families by the girls themselves because there were jobs available which were more to their liking¹. On the land, too, the situation was so serious that Frau Scholtz-Klink appealed to girls and women who were not employed to give up a few afternoons, a weekend, or longer if possible, to help out at harvest time².

In this increasingly serious situation Hitler's Government went to war, in September 1939; it at once announced that the girls' Labour Service was to be compulsory, and its numbers raised to 100,000; this level was to be achieved by Hierl's conscripting all

1. BA, NSD30/vorl. 1836, Informationsdienst..., August 1939, "Hausgehilfinnen und Kinderreiche Familien", p. 189.

2. "Alle Kräfte werden gebraucht", Westdeutscher Beobachter, 24 June, 1939.

single girls aged 17 to 25 who were neither in full-time education or employment nor "assisting family members" working on the land¹. An order by Stuckart, laying down the procedure for conscripting the first batch of girls, those born in 1920 and 1921, set the wheels in motion². But in general the central organisation of the expanded girls' Labour Service seems to have been singularly unintelligent. Discontent was perhaps at its highest in Bavaria, where it was complained that girls already working on the land, including some performing their year of compulsory service, were being conscripted into the Labour Service. Even worse, girls in the compulsory year scheme were volunteering for Labour Service in the hope of reducing the total time they would have to spend in service altogether³; and ordinary farm-workers were incensed when they realised that the Labour Service girls worked a much shorter day than they⁴.

As a matter of sheer inefficiency, the conscripting of girls familiar with office work of one kind into office work of another, to replace men called up for active service, was a source of incredulity as well as discontent⁵. But the loudest complaints came

1. "Verordnung über die Durchführung des Reichsarbeitsdienstpflicht für die weibliche Jugend", RGB, 1939 I, 4 September, 1939, p. 1693.
2. BA, Slg.Sch., 262, letter from Stuckart to Reich Ministers and the Reichsstatthalter, 27 September, 1939.
3. Ibid., letters from the Bavarian Minister of the Interior to the Bavarian NSDAP Gau leadership, and from the Bavarian office of the Reichsnährstand to the Bavarian Minister of the Interior, both dated 30 October, 1939.
4. IfZ, MA 441/6, frames 2-757123-26, MadR, 13 July, 1942.
5. IfZ, MA 441/5, frame 2-755206, MadR, 10 November, 1941.

from rural areas, where the situation was such by 1941 that serious doubts were being raised about the value of continuing to use the Labour Service for work on the land¹. Altogether, it is clear that attempts to use compulsion to make girls work in areas designated by the Government were uniformly unsuccessful; this was partly because of the failure to implement conscription rigorously, but it was also the result of the division of control among different agencies - Göring's office, the Ministry of Employment, the Labour Service - which led to duplication and contradiction instead of to co-ordination of the war-effort.

F. The Failure of Attempts to Win Women for the War Effort, 1939-41

The lesson which the Government chose to learn from the experience of the Great War was in some respects similar to that pinpointed by Nolte in 1937, namely that women would have to be brought into jobs normally done by men to release them for active service. Further, it was realised that "voluntary service is not enough"². Accordingly, in summer 1938 a law was passed specifying the categories of persons liable for labour conscription, on the basis already provided by the National Service Law of May 1935. It affirmed that both men and women were to be brought into industries necessary for the waging of war and the maintaining of essential services. There was to be exemption for those women who had children under fifteen to look after, or who were more than six months pregnant³.

1. Ibid., frames 2-755478-79, MadR, 15 December, 1941.

2. "Die Frau in der Landesverteidigung", VB, 7 March, 1939.

3. "Gesetz über Leistungen für Wehrzwecke", RGE, 1938 I, 13 July, 1938, pp. 888-89.

Although this enabling legislation had immediate application to large numbers of men, it was not yet applied to women. Advance warning was, however, given that women would be required to perform service not only in the Red Cross and in welfare activities, but actually in the armaments industry itself, in the event of war¹.

The creation of even a partial war economy - a Blitzkrieg economy, as Milward calls it² - in the autumn of 1939 necessitated the rapid transfer of women into jobs vacated by men on their conscription into the armed forces, as had long been anticipated. This was facilitated by a contraction in the consumer goods industries in which women were chiefly employed³, so that those women who found themselves without a job were at once transferred to the now vacant places in what had been regarded as "typical men's occupations", in the vital war industries. It was believed that a short training course would be sufficient to enable women who were already accustomed to the routine of factory work to change from, for example, employment in a textile factory to work in a munitions factory⁴. In addition, it was felt that the change should be

1. VB, loc. cit.

2. Alan Milward, The German Economy at War, London, 1965, pp. 7-10, explains this term.

3. Mason, op. cit., pp. 601-02, states that for reasons of popularity it was not possible for the Nazis to restrict home consumption, even in war-time, the result being that still by early 1940 no consumer goods factories had been closed. Nevertheless, the impression is that capacity was run down from September 1939; the reports of Himmler's agents cited in this section seem to bear this out.

4. "Der Fraueneinsatz in der Kriegswirtschaft", NS-Frauenwarte, May 1940, inside of front cover and p. 417.

attractive for those women who now, for the first time, were given the chance to undertake skilled and specialised work and, therefore, to earn a higher wage than formerly¹. The impression given was that the entire nation was acting in unison, and that the redeployment of labour into vital industries was going smoothly. As the Frauenschaft's magazine put it: "Women have taken over at once and in all areas of employment the positions of the men who are fighting for Germany, with a natural readiness. There exists nowhere a gap, for as soon as a man withdraws a reliable and eager woman moves into his job"².

It was only to be expected that in time of war articles relating to the vital subject of labour supply should be presented in a confident and optimistic manner. But it was soon apparent to the Government that the situation was in fact far from satisfactory. As Nolte had realised, women brought into unfamiliar work could not adequately replace men who had been used to it; as early as October 1939, Himmler's agents were reporting that "especially in armaments factories productivity has declined considerably, most of all among the women"³. But unfamiliarity with the work was not the only reason for this; discontent at conditions of work soon became a major source of concern. As had been provided in the National Service Law, there had been in September 1939 the suspension of at least some of the restrictions which had formerly protected women from having to work long and unsocial hours, so that in munitions factories they were in some cases being required to work for between

1. Walter Stothfang, Der Arbeitseinsatz im Kriege, Berlin, 1940, pp. 23-25.

2. "Frauenhände packen zu", NS-Frauenwarte, October 1939, p. 210.

3. IfZ, MA 441/1, frame 2-750111, BziL, 20 October, 1939.

10½ and 13 hours per day, whether on day-shift or night-shift.

This had dramatic results in a Kiel factory, where it was established that a series of explosions which had occurred in October 1939 had been due not to sabotage attempts - as had at first been suspected - but to the exhaustion and consequent inefficiency of the women workers.

Only in a few places were eight-hour shifts now in force, and women workers showed their discontent with the long hours they were expected to work by reporting sick or taking days off when their applications for holidays were refused, because the managers of vital war industries were not permitted to grant them¹. The main complaints made by the women were that they did not have enough time to clean the house, wash clothes, go shopping or visit relatives, and that even an eight-hour day was oppressive since many of them had to spend time travelling a long distance to work in addition. Mothers with children of school age found looking after them difficult enough; those with infants were faced with the problem that there were very few crèches.

The medical profession voiced concern at the detrimental effect long shifts on a long-term basis might have on women's health and, especially, on their reproductive capacity, and suggestions were made that five-hour shifts should be introduced, carrying the earlier experiments with half-day working into war industry. Such a scheme would be beneficial from several points of view: it would protect women from overwork; it would give them time to attend to their domestic duties; and, it was hoped, it would encourage more women to volunteer for work, since the long hours had so far been a

1. Ibid., frames 2-750094-95, BziL, 16 October, 1939.

considerable disincentive to potential workers¹. But the very fact that relatively few women were prepared to volunteer for work meant that those who were working had to continue to work long hours, and this led to mounting discontent which resulted early in 1940 in a decline in the number of women working².

This was precisely the opposite of what the Government had hoped to achieve, but in many respects it had only itself to blame. In spite of its own enabling legislation, it had failed even to try to implement conscription of female labour once the war had started. Thus, it had fallen back on propaganda to try to achieve its aim by attracting volunteers. But not only were hours and conditions of work sufficiently disadvantageous to discourage potential volunteers; wages, too, were thoroughly unattractive, so much so that those women who were working complained continually about them. Some women even felt moved to ask what had happened to the money firms saved by employing them instead of the men they had formerly had to pay at a significantly higher rate; others were simply aggrieved because they had been transferred from their peace-time jobs to war industry where they earned substantially less, because they were unfamiliar and therefore slow with the work, and remuneration was on a piece-work basis³. Managers of firms, as well as women workers, demanded a reform of the wage structure on the basis of equal pay for equal work, regardless of sex⁴, but the Government publicly announced

1. Ibid., frames 2-750490-91, MadR, 18 December, 1939.

2. BA, R18/3282, letter from Stuckart to Suren, 15 February, 1940.

IfZ, op. cit., frames 2-750862-63, MadR, 19 February, 1940.

3. Ibid., frames 2-750440-41, MadR, 11 December 1939.

4. Ibid., frame 2-750865, MadR, 19 February, 1940.

that it had no intention of undertaking fundamental reforms of this nature in war-time¹, although the need to attract women workers was becoming vital.

Even under these most unsatisfactory conditions it might have been expected that many married women would have had no choice but to work, for purely financial reasons; husbands were now at the front, no longer providing for their families. The Government had itself, however, provided the solution for many women; in a law introduced in March 1936, and extended in July 1939, it had been decreed that an allowance would be provided for the families of men serving their country in the armed forces. In fact, it had been made abundantly clear in 1939 that each person entitled to this allowance was nevertheless required to work for a living unless youth, old age, ill health or taxing family commitments made this undesirable. The provisions applying specifically to women clearly allowed for the exemption from this obligation of those who had the running of a household or the care of relatives to cope with, as well as of those whose employment would "endanger the stable upbringing of children"².

The intention here had been to avoid a situation where those who were, for one reason or another, unfit for work, and who had not had to work in peace-time, found that the source of their support had been removed and were now obliged, perhaps in distressing circumstances,

1. "Die Frauenlohn im Kriege", FZ, 20 March, 1940.

2. "Familienunterstützungsgesetz", RGB, 1936 I, 30 March, 1936, p. 327.

"Verordnung zur Ergänzung und Durchführung des Familienunterstützungsgesetzes", RGB, 1939 I, 11 July, 1939, pp. 1225-32.

to go out to work in order to survive. This was a laudable enough purpose. But the actual result was that, as employment exchanges reported in February 1940, a great number of married women who had previously been employed had given up work now that they were receiving their allowance as wives of enlisted men¹. This, as Stuckart pointed out, was the case even with women who had worked before the war, out of necessity; now, their allowance obviated this need. The Ministry of Employment was most anxious to find ways of arresting the resulting decline in the number of employed women², and a meeting was arranged to discuss the matter on 22 February, 1940³.

Meanwhile, reports of a continuing drop in the number of employed women were still coming in, as more men were called up and more wives therefore became eligible for the allowance; in addition, working women who married serving soldiers also fell into this category. The main reason for the rising number of retirements was that a substantial part of a woman's earnings was counted against her allowance, and an amount accordingly deducted from the allowance⁴. Thus, in addition to the other, considerable disadvantages attaching to employment, there was a positive financial disincentive to deter those eligible to receive the allowance from going out to work.

The failure to attract women into employment, and particularly into the war industries, led to demands for coercion and even compulsion.

1. BA, R18/3282, letter from Beisiegel, at the Ministry of Employment, to Frick, 15 February, 1940.

2. Ibid., letter from Stuckart to Suren, 15 February, 1940.

3. Ibid., letter from Beisiegel to Frick, 15 February, 1940.

4. IfZ, MA 441/1, frame 2-750864, MadR, 19 February, 1940.

The Mayor of Berlin complained in March 1940 that even childless wives of soldiers had given up work and were living on their allowance, and urged that the law be changed to prevent this¹. Seldte, as Minister of Employment, was anxious to do so, and he and Stuckart collaborated to produce a proposal for a bill to introduce the compulsory employment of women in the war effort. At the same time, discussions were taking place to frame legislation to compel women in receipt of the dependant's allowance to return to work if they did not fall into any of the exempted categories specified in the law of 11 July, 1939². But the Government saw legislation as a last resort and hoped that a propaganda campaign would still produce the desired result.

The propaganda centred around the threat of introducing compulsion which, it was hoped, would persuade enough women that sooner or later they would be obliged to work, and that they might as well volunteer before they were conscripted. Not surprisingly, however, the threat had the opposite effect: the majority of women saw no point in volunteering at once if they were bound to be

1. BA, op. cit., letter from the Mayor of Berlin to Krug von Nidda at the Ministry of the Interior, 26 March, 1940.
2. Ibid., "Verordnung zur Durchführung der Verordnung über den verstärkten Einsatz von Frauen für Aufgaben der Reichsverteidigung", May 1940 (exact date not given).

Ibid., letter from Stuckart to the Ministerial Council for the Defence of the Nation, 9 May, 1940.

conscripted in any case¹. Even Hitler's public references to the need to bring women into war work to back up the efforts of Germany's soldiers in the field² brought no response; no doubt Germany's very success in the war in 1940 and 1941, and the triumphant propaganda about it at home, helped to convince many that their contribution was not needed, and that the war would soon be brought to a victorious conclusion.

Not until 30 June, 1941, was an order issued instructing the authorities who paid the dependant's allowance to examine each case with a view to giving women the choice of returning to work - if there seemed no genuine obstacle to this - or forfeiting their allowance. By late September 1941 over 80,000 cases had been examined, over 40% of which had been judged justifiable. According to the National Statistical Office, only 17% of the total had so far taken a job, but only 293 women had positively refused to do so; the immediate reduction of their allowance had led fifty-two of them to change their mind. There was some caution about these figures, however, because they differed from those presented by the employment exchanges, which showed a higher number of those who had had their allowance

1. "Der Fraueneinsatz in der Kriegswirtschaft", NS-Frauenwarte, May 1940, p. 417.

Boberach, op. cit., no. 189, 26 May, 1941, pp. 146-48. Boberach expresses the view that all the talk about and plans for the conscription of female labour, which had still, by May 1941, had no concrete results, were purely for propaganda purposes, to encourage volunteers (p. 147n.). The document cited suggests, however, that this tactic had precisely the opposite effect.

2. Domarus, op. cit., quotes two major speeches in which Hitler appealed to German women in these terms, on 16 March, 1941 (p. 1674), and on 4 May, 1941 (pp. 1707-08).

reduced because of their refusal to work, and a lower number of those who returned to work¹.

The poor results of this measure left the issue of labour conscription open, until at a meeting on 7 November, 1941, Göring, the chairman, intimated that Hitler was now of the opinion that women who had so far refused to work would be workers of little value, and that in any case there were strong physiological grounds for objecting to women's doing strenuous work. The intention was therefore not any longer to try to increase women's employment by any means, but rather to reduce it when enough prisoners of war had been set to work². This decision to abandon attempts to coerce women into war industry without actually imposing conscription came at a time when Hitler and his advisers still believed that Russia would be defeated by Blitzkrieg tactics and the partial war economy, although their confidence soon began to wane³.

The effects of the decision were, in fact, chiefly bad for Germany: industry desperately needed extra labour; and the female workers it already had were now incensed by the unfairness, as they saw it, of their having been persuaded or even dragooned into work while those who had steadfastly refused to work in the face of strong pressure were now rewarded by being left alone. The circumstance of the working woman, which had caused so much discontent from the start

1. BA, op. cit., letter from Sicha at the National Statistical Office to Krug von Nidda, 27 September, 1941.

2. Ibid., letter from Jacobi to Suren (both at the Ministry of the Interior), 17 November, 1941.

The number of prisoners of war working in Germany was 294,393 in February 1940; by December 1940 it had risen to 1,178,668. Figures from St.J., 1941/42, p. 424. POWs could clearly provide a substantial reserve of labour.

3. Milward, op. cit., p. 45.

Carroll, op. cit., pp. 229-30.

of the war, had not been improved, and women with large families as well as a job were grossly overburdened while childless wives and single girls, who were making no contribution to the war-effort, could, for example, shop for scarce commodities at leisure¹. There was also the social divisiveness - at a time when national unity was the aim - of the fact that middle-class women and girls had been slow to volunteer in the first place, and had been ready with reasons or plausible excuses for resisting propaganda and pressure directed at persuading them to work². Stuckart, for one, had argued that conscription would have the benefit of being seen by the population as a whole to apply to those who had so far chosen to be unproductive in time of national emergency, regardless of their station in life³. His voice went unheeded; whether the reasons Hitler gave in November 1941 were the real ones for abandoning the idea of compulsion, or whether the Government was anxious not to lose face if a conscription order was widely evaded⁴, the result was that Germany was desperately short of labour for war industry, and that this was a major reason for her ultimate defeat.

At first sight, Nazi policy towards the employment of women

1. IfZ, MA 441/6, frames 7412-14, MadR, 17 August, 1942.
2. IfZ, MA 441/1, frame 2-750862, MadR, 19 February, 1940.

Boberach, op. cit., p. 148.

3. BA, op. cit., letter from Stuckart to the Ministerial Council for the Defence of the Nation, 9 May, 1940.
4. It may be argued that the Nazis were wary of antagonising the middle class, or even that it was in the nature of fascism to discriminate in favour of it. These questions are too involved, and not sufficiently relevant, to merit discussion here.

appears to have experienced an ideological volte-face, with the crude, early demands for the return of women to the home being replaced by almost equally crude demands that women seek work to release men for the armed forces. But it is reasonably clear that the ultimate aim of Nazi policy towards women was to create a situation in which women could indeed return to the home once the German nation had achieved its "rightful" place in the world. While Michalke had dismissed as unrealistic those who hoped to eliminate female employment altogether, he warned that there might in the future recur a situation where jobs were scarce, so that there might well have to be restrictions on the employment of women who were not entirely dependent on their own income¹. A writer in the Westdeutscher Beobachter also counselled moderation in 1935, proposing that those women who had been forced to work in the desperate situation of "Marxist-Centrist post-war Germany" should not be summarily thrown out of work. At the same time, however, he made it clear that a reduction in the number of women in employment was a definite long-term aim². Even during the war, when the Government was still trying to break down the strong resistance on the part of many women towards going out to work, the debate about whether women should, in principle, be employed continued. While it was seen as a bitter necessity that almost 12 million women should be working in 1940, the long-term ideal was the creation of a situation where the German woman could be a full-time housewife³.

1. Michalke, op. cit., pp. 443-44.

2. Leo Schäfer, "Grenzen der Arbeitsschlacht? Und die Frauen?" Westdeutscher Beobachter, 30 June, 1935.

3. Wiener Library Dossier, "Frauenarbeit", FZ, 9 June, 1940.

This was indeed a departure from the liberal view that each individual should be given the chance to find his or her *métier* in the way and at the pace he or she chose. But it was entirely consistent with the Nazi view that the interests of the State must have top priority. In war-time particularly, however, it quickly became clear that there was some disagreement and even confusion in the top échelons of the Government and the Party as to what precisely were the interests of the State. Whereas in Britain there was no doubt that the top priority was the defeat of Nazi Germany, and that the compulsory direction of women between 18 and 50 into at least part-time work was essential for the war effort¹, in Germany it was hoped by many, and even believed by some, that such an expedient would not be necessary.

The result was an absence of positive direction from the centre, so that local Labour Front representatives were to be found making "official" utterances which were often not only different from each other but even positively contradictory². This vagueness was, as Mason rightly says³, the product of reluctance to antagonise the population by introducing unpopular policies. Perhaps even more fundamentally, it resulted from the division of opinion between the ideologues, who were determined to implement Party theory, even when it was totally impractical, and the men - like Seldte and Stuckart - who had to make the system work. In the case of trying to compel

1. Alva Myrdal and Viola Klein, Women's Two Roles, London, 1968, pp. 51-53, gives a brief account of this.

2. IfZ, MA 441/6, frames 7414-16, MadR, 17 August, 1942.

3. Mason, *op. cit.*, p. 605.

women into war work, this combination of fear of popular discontent and ideological stubbornness led to the abandoning, until 1943, of attempts to force women to provide the labour Germany vitally needed. The arbitrary decision of the Führer, a man whose views were increasingly removed from reality, was sufficient to ensure that the long-term Nazi obsession with protecting women "biologically" took precedence over the essential immediate aim of concentrating all available resources on the task of ensuring the survival of the Third Reich.

and retrenchment in Government expenditure wherever possible had become necessary. Education, as a major State expenditure, was immediately affected. The concept of this had direct and indirect effects on opportunities for women beyond the level of compulsory schooling, up to the age of 14; but it is important to realize that men, too, were affected, often in a similar way. This was true even under the Nazi Government, although Hitler had already made his Party's views on women's education clear: "future motherhood is to be the definite aim of female education"¹. This suggested that the Nazis would aim to free women from what they regarded as the masculine elements of education, the intellectual ones, to which they were not suited². On this point it has been generally assumed - often wrongly - that in the Third Reich girls were denied an academic education at

1. On the importance of marriage in achieving professional work, see for example, Adolf Hitler, "Mein Kampf", 2nd ed., Munich, 1941, pp. 11-12.

2. Hitler, op. cit., pp. 159-60.

3. F. Miller, "Die Frauenbewegung", F. Miller (ed.), Leipzig, 1934, pp. 11-12.

CHAPTER FOUR

Higher Education and Senior Schooling for GirlsIntroduction

As a result of the progress made in opening the universities to women before the Great War and providing senior schooling to prepare women for higher education, the 1920s saw an improvement in educational and professional opportunities for women¹. By the end of the decade, however, Germany was in the throes of economic disaster, and retrenchment in Government expenditure wherever possible had become necessary. Education, as a major State enterprise, was immediately affected. The results of this had direct and indirect effects on opportunities for women beyond the level of compulsory schooling, up to the age of 14; but it is important to realise that men, too, were affected, often in a similar way. This was true even under the Nazi Government, although Hitler had already made his Party's views on women's education clear: "future motherhood is to be the definite aim of female education"². This suggested that the Nazis would aim to free women from what they regarded as the masculine elements of education, the intellectual ones, to which they were not suited³. On this basis, it has been generally assumed - often wrongly - that in the Third Reich girls were denied an academic education at

1. On the limitations to progress in achieving professional positions for women, see Michael Kater, "Krisis des Frauenstudiums in der Weimarer Republik", Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte, 1972, pp. 217-18.
2. Hitler, op. cit., pp. 459-60.
3. F. Hiller, "Mädchenerziehung", F. Hiller (ed.), Deutsche Erziehung im neuen Staat, Langensalza, 1934, p. 350.

school and severely discriminated against in universities and colleges¹. It is therefore the aim of this chapter to show that many of the early educational policies attributed to the Nazi Government were prefigured in measures of the last Weimar Governments, measures dictated by economic necessity, and that the policies actually initiated by the Nazi Government were similarly moulded by necessity, with the result that dogma and ideology had, with changing circumstances in the 1930s, to be set aside on a number of occasions. In addition, it will be shown that reactionary and philistine attitudes were by no means the prerogative of the NSDAP alone, but that there was, even among the better educated, the feeling that, far from too little progress having been achieved in making higher education available to a wider range of people, there had been too much change, particularly in the field of education for women.

A. The Depression and Opposition to Higher Education for Girls; in particular, the Nazi View

The chief problem in higher education in 1930 was that there were far too many students in universities and colleges for many of them to have a chance of finding a professional or managerial position

1. Examples of this are to be found in:

Otto B. Roegele, "Student im Dritten Reich", Otto B. Roegele (ed.) Die Deutsche Universität im Dritten Reich, Munich, 1966, pp. 161-62.

Rolf Eilers, Die nationalsozialistische Schulpolitik, Cologne and Opladen, 1963, pp. 18-21.

Karl Bracher, "Die Ideologische Gleichschaltung", K. D. Bracher, W. Sauer, G. Schulz, Die nationalsozialistische Machtergreifung Cologne and Opladen, 1960, p. 322.

Richard Grunberger, A Social History of the Third Reich, London, 1971, pp. 260-61, 285-86.

at the end of their studies, in the shrunken market of the depression years. This was at the very time when women's representation in the universities was stronger than it had ever been: in the summer semester of 1931, 19,394 girls constituted 18.7% of the record total of 103,912 students, and in the following semester women even increased their share to 18.9%, the strongest point of their representation before the Second World War¹. This trend received a not unmixed reception: many people remained unconvinced of either the necessity or the desirability of admitting women to academic study². A former Baden Minister of Education, Professor Willy Hellpach, conceded that a small number of women should continue to attend universities, but asserted that only a tiny fraction of them would give value for the money spent on them, since the majority would marry without even starting a career. While he deplored the stultifying education which had formerly been all that was available to girls in the nineteenth century, he nevertheless described the female nature as "always more intuitive and irrational. Therefore," he added, "academic schooling in languages and mathematics should be restricted to factual matter"³.

Others were less moderate: male students, particularly, claimed that not only were academic standards falling because of the presence of girls in universities in ever-increasing numbers, but, in addition, that the long-standing tradition of "student comradeship"

1. Calculated from figures in St.J., 1932, pp. 426-27.

2. For detailed examples of this, see Michael Kater, *op. cit.*, pp. 219-29.

3. Willy Hellpach, Die Wesensgestalt der deutschen Schule, Leipzig, 1926, pp. 151-53.

was being destroyed. Replying to comments of this kind, a writer in Die Frau im Staat asserted that women were clearly performing a real service if they were destroying the exclusive, beer-swilling male corporations. She also claimed that there was an element in the male student body which was trying to disguise its own inadequacies by launching an all-out attack on women with the aim of driving them out of the universities¹. Certainly, the reaction against the overcrowding of the universities, aimed at students in general, and not at girls in particular, caused alarm among the men, to the extent that one male students' magazine suggested that girls should be denied full rights of matriculation, and should confine themselves to "their characteristic occupations"². It was abundantly clear that this meant running a home and bearing children.

The first restriction imposed in higher education did in fact affect girls specifically. In 1929, the Prussian authorities issued an order limiting the number of girls who would be admitted to train as technical teachers, since it was becoming difficult to find places for those already qualified. At the same time, it was announced that the number of female students of physical education would also be reduced³. This was not, however, deliberate discrimination against girls, but an ad hoc measure to try to relieve the pressure of student numbers where it was felt to be urgent, and where it could most easily be effected. As the situation worsened, the Prussian Government saw fit to close the physical education college

1. E. Knowles, "Ketzerische Gedanken Über die Invasion der studierenden Frau", FiS, April 1930, p. 9.

2. "Die Lage der Frau in den geistigen Berufen", BF, July/August, 1932, p. 2.

3. HA, reel 37, fol. 736, "Mitteilungen des Reichsfrauenausschusses der DDP", 15 December, 1929.

at Spandau, for members of both sexes, in spite of protests from DVP deputies in the Landtag¹.

At the national level, there was widespread concern about the creation of an "academic proletariat" of jobless graduates; Das Deutsche Studentenwerk, the organisation through which grants were paid to able but needy students, strongly criticised the admission of an indiscriminate flood of young people into higher education². In the Government itself, there were discussions held from 1930 onwards at the Reich Ministry of the Interior aimed at finding ways to reduce the pressure on senior schools as well as colleges. The chief conclusion arrived at by the experts consulted by Dr. Wirth, the Minister, was that there would have to be a rigorous selection process for applicants for higher education. It was suggested that the voluntary Labour Service, created primarily for the unemployed in July 1931, should be particularly recommended to school-leavers, since many of them would be obliged to find jobs of a practical nature, given the saturation of the professional market³.

There was, however, one favourable factor, which ought to have allayed the authorities' fears to some degree, but does not appear to have done so. This was the decline, in the years 1928-33, in the number of senior school pupils which was the result not of a rigorous selection process but of the fact that those children born in the years of the low war-time birth rate were reaching senior school age at this

1. BA, R45II/64, DVP Reichsgeschäftsstelle, Januar-April 1932, report of 23 January, 1932.
2. E. W. Eschmann (ed.), Wo findet die deutsche Jugend neuen Lebensraum?, Berlin and Leipzig, 1932, p. v.
3. Christoph Führ, "Schulpolitik im Spannungsfeld zwischen Reich und Ländern", supplement to Das Parlament, 17 October, 1970, pp. 28-29.

time. Numbers in girls' senior schools actually suffered a smaller decline than those in boys' schools, since there was at this time a higher proportion of girls aiming for senior schooling and higher education than previously. But, even so, the girls' private schools experienced heavy losses, with the increasing tendency for girls, like boys, to attend the State schools, whose educational standards were higher¹.

Particularly noticeable was the trend towards a greater degree of coeducation, for purely practical reasons, since small senior classes, and even schools, for girls could be disbanded, and expenditure on salaries and the maintenance of buildings saved. In some states, coeducation was increased to such an extent that girls formed a very significant proportion of pupils at schools which were primarily intended for boys. In Thuringia, an extreme case, there were in 1933 more girls attending boys' schools than girls' schools, while in the ten smaller North German states 25% of all girls receiving senior schooling were at boys' schools². Throughout the country as a whole, however, the proportion was smaller, with 35,600 girls at boys' schools in 1931-32 constituting 6.7% of the total; this was a slight increase over the 1926-27 figures of 28,800 and 5.2%. The general result of these figures was to increase the total number of girls receiving senior schooling, to 283,000, so that in 1931-32, when the total number of senior school pupils had actually dropped - and numbers at girls' schools, too, had dropped - the total number of

1. "Reichsschulstatistik 1931/32", St.D.R., vol. 438, 1933, pp. 6, 21, 27, 30, 35.

2. Ludwig Wülker, "Die öffentliche höhere Mädchenschulen der nord-deutschen Länder im Philologenjahrbuch von 1933", D. MEd., April 1934, pp. 84-86.

girls at senior schools had increased from the 1926-27 figure of 278,000. The proportion of girls to boys in senior schools was accordingly raised from 53.2 to 57.1 per 100¹.

This development in no way signified an official decision in favour of coeducation in principle; its merits were vigorously debated throughout the Weimar era, with the Social Democrats and Communists advocating it and the Roman Catholic Church its strongest opponent. It had been accepted as a necessary and temporary measure before the First World War in those areas where the only girls' senior school was the Höhere Töcherschule, but anxiety increased among those who opposed it in principle as the number of girls at boys' schools grew rather than diminished in the 1920s. Even the relatively enlightened Prussian Education Ministry admitted to being "seriously opposed to coeducation for reasons based on developmental psychology and educational sociology.... Coeducation, or rather coinstruction, as a makeshift is in a different position"². In Bavaria, the power of the Catholic Church and the Bavarian People's Party meant that coeducation could barely be considered a live issue, while at the national level the Centre Party was able to block any move against segregation of the sexes. The radical Alice Rühle-Gerstel regretted that the "tentative experiments" in coeducation had not succeeded in converting its opponents during the 1920s, and observed that in village schools, where small numbers made coeducation a necessity, boys and girls still sat at opposite sides of the classroom³.

1. St.D.R., op. cit., p. 31.

2. I. L. Kandel and Thomas Alexander (trans.), The Reorganisation of Education in Prussia: Based on Official Documents and Publications, New York, 1927, pp. 102-03.

3. Mathilde Drees, "Das Mädchenbildungswesen", Zentralinstitut für Erziehung und Unterricht (ed.), Die Reichsschulkonferenz in ihren Ergebnissen, Leipzig, 1921, pp. 69-73.

Rühle-Gerstel, op. cit., pp. 49-50.

On the two issues that worried the conservatives and the clericalists most, the "inflation" of student numbers in the later 1920s and early 1930s and doctrinal opposition to coeducation, the National Socialist Party took a similar, if more militant, stand. The Nazis had always criticised the overvaluing of purely academic study, and their strong anti-intellectualism¹ was complemented by their insistence on the merits of more practical occupations. Indeed, one of the demands of Point 20 of their Party Programme of 1920 was that teaching curricula be brought into line with the requirements of day-to-day living². Mein Kampf's version was that the first emphasis should be laid on physical training, with spiritual nourishment taking second place and the study of academic subjects only a poor third. In this respect, at least, girls' education was to be governed by the same principles as boys'³. But the fundamental Nazi dogma of the basic differences between the sexes - and therefore the need for their "separate development" - invested the Party's official line on the question of girls' education, at every level.

In this area, as in many others, much of Nazi thought was based on a revulsion against the developments of the post-war years. The Party's attitudes were neither original nor revolutionary; rather,

1. Hitler's speech at the first congress of the Labour Front, 10 May, 1933, found in Domarus, op. cit., vol. I, p. 268.

Bernhard Rust, "Das Preussische Kultusministerium seit der nationalen Erhebung", Hiller, op. cit., pp. 39-40.

Nieuwenhuysen, op. cit., p. 44.

2. Found in Walter Hofer, Der Nationalsozialismus, Frankfurt am Main, 1957, p. 30.

3. Hitler, loc. cit.

they were a conglomeration and extension of the old conservative ideas prevalent at the end of the nineteenth century, when women were agitating for admission to the universities, still apparent after the First World War, and by no means dead in 1930. The Nazi objection to attempts to give girls the same kind of education as boys, on the grounds that girls and boys were fundamentally different mentally as well as physically, was only a restatement of a view current at the turn of the twentieth century¹. Similarly old-fashioned was the Nazis' recurring assertion that women were subjective, whereas men were objective, women were emotional and sentimental, whereas men were creative and calculating; for these reasons, women were considered basically unsuited to academic study². The emphasis on the formal and abstract, to the neglect of women's natural disposition towards the actual and practical, had led, the Nazis claimed, to a corruption of girls' education during the years of the Weimar Republic. Even worse, all girls who valued their essential womanliness had been regarded as exceptions, and the natural calling of woman, that of housewife and mother, had been devalued³.

1. Arthur Kirchhoff (ed.), Die Akademische Frau, Berlin, 1897, p. xi.

James E. Russell, German Higher Schools, New York, 1907, pp. 131, 420.

2. Hans-Joachim von Schumann, Die nationalsozialistische Erziehung im Rahmen amtlicher Bestimmungen, Langensalza, n.d. (?1934), pp. 39-40.

Marie Schorn, "Frauenstudium in der Zukunft", A. Reber-Gruber (ed.), Weibliche Erziehung im NSLB, Leipzig and Berlin, 1934, p. 16.

3. "Die Geschlechter im Dritten Reich", Fränkische Tageszeitung, 17 April, 1934.

Mayer, op. cit., pp. 30-32.

As was generally the case, there was a grain of truth in the picture drawn by the NSDAP; great stress had, after all, been laid on the importance of giving girls the chance of an academic education similar to that available to boys, although only a very small - if increasing - minority of schoolgirls would have the desire or the ability to benefit from it. And in spite of official recognition, at least in Prussia, of the vital place of women "in the family, in a vocation, or in some other place in the interests of general welfare"¹, the academic senior schools had made no provision for training in homecraft in their time-table, with the small exception of a little instruction in needlework in the Lyzeum². Domestic science instruction had been available to those who specifically were not pursuing an academic career, but the Frauenschule³ had certainly not been regarded as the equal of the other types of senior school. Conceding these points does not, however, detract from the fact that the Nazis greatly exaggerated and distorted the situation, as yet another stick with which to beat the Republican politicians from the vantage-point of opposition, and as a means of discrediting them once the Party had achieved power.

In extravagant language, the Nazis attacked the "Jewish-intellectual" concept of the highly-educated woman, and what they called the "liberal-democratic-marxist" practice of encouraging women

1. Kandel and Alexander, op. cit., p. 541.

2. Thomas Alexander and Beryl Parker, The New Education in the German Republic, London, 1930, pp. 256-57, 275-76.

3. The Frauenschule was the name given to a stream in the girls' senior school which gave instruction in domestic science, cooking, child-care, hygiene, et al.. Op. cit., p. 277.

to achieve the same aims as men, when their beings were different and complementary¹. Girls had often appeared inferior because they were being judged by the same criteria as boys, criteria which were not relevant to the female nature². Emphasis on practical education, related to the needs of living, meant, therefore, that girls' education must differ from boys', to correspond with the different roles they were intended by nature to play. The result was that even in subjects studied by both sexes, girls' education would be slanted differently from boys'. For this reason, coeducation could have no place in Nazi policy, since it allowed the development of neither a real man nor a true woman³.

In the Third Reich, the new course in girls' education was to be one in which a transformation of purpose would take place both in school and after it. While training for the future wives and mothers of Germans should be provided, the need, it was felt, was less for mechanical instruction in the arts of housekeeping and child-care - although these subjects would definitely have their place - than for education to an awareness of the girls' responsibility for the stability of society and to the future generation of Germans⁴. Individualism,

1. Hitler's speech to the Frauenschaft at the Nuremberg Congress of 1934, found in Domarus, op. cit., p. 451.

Rudolf Hess, "Die Aufgaben der deutschen Frau", VB, 27 May, 1936.

2. Schumann, loc. cit.

Hiller, op. cit., p. 350.

3. Schumann, loc. cit.

Johannes Büttner, (ed.), Der Weg zum Nationalsozialistischen Reich, Berlin, 1943, p. 858.

4. Hiller, op. cit., p. 351.

which the Nazis saw as the scourge of Germany in the 1920s, was to be completely discouraged, and service - in the family, in the community, at work, even in public life - was to be the main theme of education. In announcing this, Hedwig Förster, the adviser on girls' schooling in the Prussian Ministry of Education, stressed that there would be a sharp reduction in the academic content of girls' senior schooling, and a corresponding increase in the time allotted to those subjects which would guide girls into occupations of a practical or an artistic nature, particularly into the field of social welfare¹. Emphasis was to be laid on the study of German history and culture, as well as on health, family affairs and physical exercise. Since motherhood was regarded as the primary function of women, girls should be educated for occupations to which their maternal instincts were relevant. It was conceded that medicine, social work and teaching in girls' or primary schools should be numbered among these vocations, and therefore it was also admitted that academic study would have its place in the education of some girls, and that the universities should not be closed to them².

These ideas were the basic ones which the Nazis set out to put into practice from 1933. But the eclectic nature of National Socialism meant that it attracted large numbers of people who held differing views on specific subjects. There were those, for example, who espoused the hard-line extremism of Professor J. W. Mannhardt, epitomised in

1. Hedwig Förster, "Die künftige Gestaltung des Mädchenschulwesens", FZ, 8 July, 1933.
2. BA, R43II/427, letter from Frick to Reich Ministers and State Governments, 5 October, 1933.

Paula Siber, Die Frauenfrage und ihre Lösung durch den Nationalsozialismus, Berlin, 1933, p. 30.

the following passage:

"It is established that study cannot offer women a suitable general education. Women will in future be employed much less in occupations requiring a period of study.... Therefore the senior schools will not need to prepare girls for the universities. Girls' senior schools will have other tasks and aims: the special womanly abilities, on which woman herself brought discredit because of the desire for 'equality' with men"¹.

Those who felt that this point of view was perhaps too rigid contended that women might perform adequately, and even well, exceptionally, in many academic subjects, but drew the line at the suggestion that girls might study mathematics and the deductive sciences successfully, since women were intuitive by nature rather than rational². Protests, such as that made in 1934 by Dr. Heinrich Voigts, himself a teacher, that a mathematical training could at least help women to carry out their household management with greater efficiency³, failed to shake this prejudice⁴. The once reasonably favourable position of women in mathematics and science departments in the universities began to deteriorate after 1933. This was the result of a deliberate policy, by which men were given preference in positions which required a scientific or mathematical training, as a matter of principle, so that poor employment prospects acted as a disincentive to girls who might have studied these subjects, although

1. J. W. Mannhardt, Hochschulrevolution, Hamburg, 1933, p. 72.

2. Fränkische Tageszeitung, op. cit.

3. Heinrich Voigts, "Der mathematische Unterricht in der Mädchenschule des völkischen Staates", D.Mäd., February 1934, p. 27.

4. An example of the persistence of this prejudice is to be found in Anna Kottenhoff, "Vom Wesen und von der Verantwortung des geistigen Frauenschaffens", FK, January 1939, p. 4.

the door was by no means closed to such study¹.

Most of the protests against the new guide-lines announced for girls' education came, as might have been expected, from women. The less predictable feature of this was that they came from women sympathetic to the Nazis. Certainly, potential political opposition had been quickly and successfully silenced, while "unreliable" individuals were neutralised by being banned from publishing books and articles². But in the first year of Nazi rule a number of pamphlets appeared, which, while carefully stating support for the new order, criticised the attacks which had been made on the fitness of women for academic study. Gertrud Baumgart claimed that there was a "very strong current running against intellectual women in the universities". She cited as the reason for this the indiscriminate admission of school-leavers of both sexes who were ill-suited to university study. Her solution was a more rigorous selection process for all students, not just for women. Gertrud Baumgart demanded the education of women to national and social responsibility, and asserted that this implied both physical and intellectual training, and the admission of women to the universities and to the professions³.

A similar demand for equal treatment for aspiring students of both sexes came from Irmgard Reichenau, in an open letter to Adolf Hitler. She argued that the division between the sexes was narrower than that

1. Luise Raulf, "Frau und Naturwissenschaft", FK, November 1937, p. 13.

2. "1. Verordnung zur Durchführung des Reichskulturkammergesetzes", RGB, 1933 I, 1 November, 1933, pp. 797-98.

George L. Mosse, Nazi Culture, London, 1966, p. 135.

3. Gertrud Baumgart, Frauenbewegung Gestern und Heute, Heidelberg, 1933, pp. 17 and 31.

between the talented and the less gifted, whether they were men or women. In true Nazi fashion she deplored "over-intellectuality", which, she claimed, however, was more likely to be found in men than in women¹. Another writer, Dorothea Klaje-Wenzel, was specifically concerned about the prospects for women who wanted to study medicine, and expressed the fear that there would be an attempt to bar women from medical faculties². But one of the leading figures in the Nazi women's organisation in the early days of power, Paula Siber, was quick to point out that all branches of university study were indeed open to women, and cited medicine as one which could be considered particularly suitable for them³.

The extent to which National Socialist ideas bore a variety of interpretations is well illustrated in an exchange in a student magazine in 1935. In one edition, a male student leader asserted categorically that the universities should be largely a male preserve, with women admitted as guests in those instances where the "special womanly occupations" necessitated a measure of academic training. He admitted that the surplus of women in the population might mean that some women would have to do men's jobs, but denied that a place should be made for them in academic occupations⁴. This point of view is hardly distinguishable from that expressed before the Machtübernahme by men who feared female competition for scarce professional positions.

1. Irmgard Reichenau, "Die begabte Frau", Irmgard Reichenau (ed.), Deutsche Frauen an Adolf Hitler, Leipzig, 1934, pp. 24-25.

2. Dorothea Klaje-Wenzel, Die Frau in der Volksgemeinschaft, Leipzig, 1934, p. 36.

3. Siber, loc. cit.

4. Otto Schuster in Wissen und Dienst, 1935, no. 1, p. 13.

It was hotly contested in the following edition of the magazine by a girl student who agreed that clarification of the status of women vis-a-vis higher education was needed, but claimed that both male and female students should be able to serve the Volk, together and not in opposition to each other. Her spirited defence of the right of women to study was, however, somewhat different from the uninhibited retaliation women had made in the face of male attacks before 1933: it was necessarily accompanied by pious affirmations of unswerving loyalty to Hitler, of the ideal of motherhood as woman's goal, and of opposition to any idea of "emancipation"¹.

It is clear that the conflict between men and women over the right of women to study in universities was generated by the prospect, in the early 1930s, of a limitation of student numbers in the face of graduate unemployment, and was not the result of the policies of the Nazi Government. Nazi beliefs about the nature and role of women, which were constantly being reiterated, did, however, give the impression that the Government was unequivocally on the side of the men, and that if there were too many students women would be the first to be excluded. But in the Nazi State theory and practice were by no means always synonymous, as became increasingly more apparent as the 1930s progressed and circumstances changed.

B. Nazi Policies in the field of Higher Education for Girls

The first problem facing the new Government in education was one of sheer numbers, and so little time was wasted in beginning an offensive against university "inflation". Kulin, Minister responsible for the Employment Exchanges, was, however, only continuing a process

1. Edith Runge in Wissen und Dienst, 1935, no. 2, pp. 39-40.

he had begun under the previous regime when he predicted a crisis in the professional labour market in the next four or five years; this was the result, he said, of the trebling of student numbers since 1914. He repeated the conclusion drawn by the committee which had been looking at the problem since 1930, that in future many school-leavers would have to find their niche in positions which did not require academic study, even if they were qualified for university entrance¹. Two days later, still less than three weeks after the Machtübernahme, it was announced that each applicant for higher education was to be vetted by an examination board, and those regarded as least suitable were to be advised against proceeding to a college. Those who did not heed such advice were to be observed closely during their first three semesters so that an assessment of their suitability could better be made². As yet, then, there was no question either of outright coercion being used, or of girls being treated differently from boys. It became clear, however, that the selection process was designed to serve a purpose additional to that of cutting down numbers: "suitability" was to be gauged partly by a character reference, so that those considered politically or socially undesirable by the Government could be prevented from entering the universities³.

Apart from this last discrimination, the policy followed here was largely that envisaged under the Weimar governments; but the important thing is that action was at last being taken, action which

1. BA, R36/1929, "Gesichtspunkte für die Berufsberatung der Abiturienten in der Krise", letter of 16 February, 1933.
2. BA, R43II/936, "Ein Sieb für das Studium", cutting from Vossische Zeitung, 18 February, 1933.
3. Joachim Haupt, Neuordnung im Schulwesen und Hochschulwesen, Berlin, 1933, p. 9.

had been lacking because of the absence both of a central agency to direct education and of strong and stable government. The German universities were administered by the government of the state to which they belonged, so a unified policy had been difficult to achieve¹. But Frick, the new Reich Minister of the Interior, overrode the difficulties and achieved agreement on united action on the matter of selecting university entrants by the Education Ministers of each Land, in February 1933². As part of the new Government's policy of centralisation, Frick assumed responsibility for educational matters at the national level; the creation of a section in his Ministry specifically to deal with education signalled the end of the autonomy enjoyed in this area by the Länder³. Finally, a Reich Ministry of Education was created by an order of President Hindenburg on 1 May, 1934, and ten days later Bernhard Rust, Prussian Education Minister, was appointed Reich Minister, on Hitler's nomination⁴. Henceforth, the Minister merely transmitted orders to the Reichsstatthalter, and, while the implementing of the orders was in the hands of the Länder, they could no longer have any real independence in educational affairs - especially important at the school level - and their room for unilateral manoeuvre was increasingly diminished⁵.

1. Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst publication, German Universities - a Manual for Foreign Scholars and Students, Berlin, 1932, p. 7.

2. BA, loc. cit.

3. Eilers, op. cit., p. 54.

4. Schumann, op. cit., p. 43.

W. Bade, Der Weg des Dritten Reiches, Lübeck, 1935, vol. 3, p. 36.

5. Eilers, op. cit., pp. 55-57.

The tactics of exhortation and counsel employed to try to reduce student numbers in the first instance were apparently not sufficient, for it was found necessary to issue on 25 April, 1933, a national law "to combat the surplus in German schools and colleges". This ordered that, apart from the statutory minimum attendance requirements, the number of pupils and students was to be so regulated as to safeguard basic educational standards and to provide an adequate number of candidates for the professions. The governments of the Länder were to be responsible for deciding what numbers their senior schools and colleges could accommodate. But it was definitely stipulated that non-"Aryans" were to enjoy no higher representation in these institutions than they did in the total population¹. This was the first statutory discrimination in education against a specific group, and while it is in no way to be condoned, it could hardly have been unexpected, given the Nazis' fantastic and fanatical racial beliefs.

The law of 25 April equally failed to have the desired effect, so that Frick felt it necessary to order a much more explicit restriction, on 28 December, 1933. The new order fixed a definite quota for the total number of new students to be admitted to universities and colleges each year: of the 15,000 to be allowed to matriculate for the first time each Land was to be allotted a detailed number which it might not exceed, and the choice was to be made on the basis of the mental and physical maturity, the strength of character, and the political reliability of the candidates. For the first time,

1. "Gesetz gegen die Überfüllung deutscher Schulen und Hochschulen", RGB, 1933 I, 25 April, 1933, p. 225.

girls were singled out for particular restriction, since it was stipulated that in no case were their numbers to exceed 10% of the quota allowed for each Land. School-leavers who were not admitted to colleges were advised to take up an occupation of a practical nature¹, in keeping with Nazi theory as expressed in Point 20 of the Party Programme. In the case of girls, this invariably meant domestic service or work on a farm.

The restrictions imposed on entry to higher education have generally been regarded a manifestation of the philistinism and evil-mindedness of the Nazis. Certainly, the singling out of non-"Aryans" and political opponents for limitation in the first instance may be seen at least partly in this light. But apart from this, the fixing of some kind of quota was but a logical conclusion to the economic depression and its effects on the employability of graduates; it was also the continuation, in a much more effective way, of a policy already embarked on before the Machtübernahme, and one which had found vocal supporters among people of differing political persuasions. And if a special restriction on the intake of girl students seemed to be a manifestation of the Nazi view of women's role, it must be remembered that there had already, in 1929, been a measure directed specifically at restricting girl entrants to colleges of physical education. As was almost invariably the case, the Nazis could lay no claim to originality.

They did, however, use the occasion for a propaganda exercise: Dr. Pfundtner, Frick's Secretary of State, said in a broadcast two

1. BA, R43II/936, "Zahlenmässige Begrenzung des Zuganges zu den Hochschulen", Wolff's Telegraphisches Büro, 28 December, 1933.

weeks after the order that a restriction on numbers had been necessary for a sound reconstitution of the universities after the unhealthy "liberalism" of the previous regime. The burden of his message was that the overestimation of intellectual pursuits and the undervaluing of practical work were mistakes which must be rectified. In order to console those who might now feel deprived of the chance of advancement, he stressed that the National Socialist revolution had shown that men without an academic education could rise to occupy the highest positions in the State¹.

Even before the statutory limitation was in force the number of new entrants to all colleges had actually been dropping, after reaching an abnormally high point of almost 30,000 in 1931; the 1933 figure was lower than this by one-third, at less than 21,000. Once the restriction applied, the total intake for 1934 was again lower by one-third, at under 14,000, well below the quota. But the aim of restricting girls to 10% of all new entrants was not realised; although a proportionately smaller number of girls was admitted in 1934 than in 1933, the figure for 1934 was still as high as 12.5%².

It was in fact the very success of the quota law which led Rust to rescind what he termed an "only temporary measure" in February 1935, when it had been in force for little more than a year and effective for only the 1934 intake of students³. Application of the law was not, however, the only reason for the reduction by one-third

1. "Die Begrenzung des Zuzugs zu den Hochschulen: Rundfunkvortrag des Staatssekretärs Pfundtner", VB, 12 January, 1934.

2. Deutsche Hochschulstatistik, Berlin, 1934/35, pp. *4-*5.

3. Report in WuS, 1935, vol. 15, no. 9, p. 334.

of the total number of students in the three-and-a-half years after 1931, when student numbers had indeed been abnormally high¹. Part of the cause was that the smaller numbers of children born during the First World War were now reaching university age. In addition, matriculation had generally been delayed, rather than averted, by the introduction of compulsory Labour Service for all school-leavers wishing to proceed to higher education; thus, potential new students for the summer semester of 1934 did not in fact matriculate for the first time until winter 1934-35². The reintroduction of conscription in March 1935 also affected student numbers: the withdrawal of young men to perform military service before admission to university was an important factor in the decline to 57,000 in the number of students in summer 1935; this was the lowest figure there had been since 1916, in war-time. That this was largely due to a reduction in the number of male students can be seen from the fact that in 1935 the proportion of girls in the student body had once again risen to almost 17%³.

While the Technical Universities, which specialised in the applied sciences and engineering, and in which the number of girl students was always very small, followed a pattern roughly similar to that of the conventional universities, the teacher-training colleges showed a different trend. In 1935 these Hochschule für

1. Conclusion drawn from figures given in St.J.: 1932, pp. 426-27; 1933, pp. 522-23; 1934, pp. 534-35; 1935, pp. 520-21.
2. BA, R43II/936, "Das Diensthalbjahr der Studenten", cutting from Vossische Zeitung, 9 March, 1934.
3. Calculated from figures in St.J., 1936, pp. 544-45.

Lehrerbildung¹ had a record number of students, but the lowest-ever percentage of girls among them, at 12%; this was in contrast to a share of over 30% only two-and-a-half years earlier². But a reduction of these dimensions was not, apparently, considered sufficient, since in April 1936 Rust placed a firm restriction on the number of girls to be admitted to teacher-training colleges. He explained that there were already more than enough women senior school teachers, and, in addition, a large number of students preparing for this career. In order, therefore, to arrest the flow of girls into teaching, none was to be admitted to a Prussian college in the winter semester of 1936-37. The combining of the Prussian with the Reich Education Ministry at the beginning of 1935³ made it unlikely that this order would not also apply to the small number of teacher-training colleges outside Prussia. In order to avoid circumvention of the order by school-leavers, it was also stipulated that no girl who was aiming to teach would be admitted directly to a university; she must first spend two semesters at a teacher-training college. Rust conceded that this restriction might be lifted for the summer semester of 1937, but only to an extent compatible with the demands

1. The Prussian Education Minister, Rust, issued orders on 20 April and 6 May, 1933, to the effect that the classically-derived name Pädagogische Akademie should be replaced by the truly Germanic Hochschule für Lehrerbildung, as part of the campaign to stamp out internationalism and make students more nationally conscious. This is described in Schumann, op. cit., p. 21, and Haupt, op. cit., pp. 22-23. The orders affected most colleges, since in 1933 eight of the ten teacher-training colleges in Germany were in Prussia (St.J., 1934, p. 538).

2. Calculated from figures given in St.J.: 1936, pp. 547-48; 1933, pp. 526-27.

3. Eilers, op. cit., p. 55.

of the labour market. Girls who would be obliged by this measure to wait for a year before applying for a college place were advised to perform Labour Service and, if possible, also to engage in some form of domestic service or work on a farm¹.

This last exhortation should not lead to the impression that the entire measure was designed to prevent girls from receiving higher education and preparing themselves for a career outside the home. The Nazis always hoped, of course, that all girls would have some experience of household tasks before they married, and that all young people training for non-manual careers would have practical experience of physical work; these aims could well be fulfilled in this enforced period of waiting between school and college, which was very necessary in view of the surplus of teachers over available teaching positions. The limitation in this case did, however, apply only to girls, which was in line with Nazi Party policy that men should have preference in career opportunities to enable them to marry and support a family as early as possible. But the admission of girls was only to be delayed, and not prevented, since teaching was one of the occupations regarded as suitable for women in Nazi theory.

Rust's restriction of April 1936 was, in fact, singularly ineffective: in the winter semester of 1936-37 there was actually an increase in the number of girls attending teacher-training colleges, to the extent that there were almost twice as many as there had been even in the peak year of 1931. Over one-third of these 1500 girls attended the two-year-old college in Hanover, which was exclusively

1. "Studium der Abiturientinnen, die Studienrätinnen oder Volksschullehrerinnen werden wollen", DWEEuV, 1936, no. 288, 8 April, 1936, p. 209.

for girl students, while another 188 were at the new, all-female college at Schneidemühl¹. Particularly in view of the fact that both these colleges were in Prussia, it is clear that, for some reason, the Minister's order was not being enforced, in spite of the stress he had laid on its necessity. And yet, this does not seem to have been because Rust had changed his mind, because in April 1937 he tried another tactic: he decreed that in future the admission of girls to teacher-training colleges should take place only once a year, in autumn, instead of twice a year, as had formerly been the case. He also made it clear that while 1937 school-leavers were permitted to apply for a place in 1937, preference would be given to those who had left school in earlier years; and if there were places available for 1937 school-leavers, preference would be given to members of the Bund deutscher Mädel (League of German Girls)². The difference between this order and the one of a year earlier was that the former's provisions applied in a corresponding way to intending male students, whereas the 1936 decree had applied specifically to girls; it is thus quite clear that in this branch of higher education the Nazi Government did not relentlessly discriminate against girls.

Anxiety about the number of entrants to teacher-training colleges took a different form from 1937. Rust himself opened a new college in Koblenz, exclusively for girl students, with words about "the special mission of women teachers" in November of that year³. The

1. Conclusions drawn from figures given in St.J., 1937, p. 582.

2. "Aufnahme an den preussischen Hochschulen für Lehrerbildung, Herbst 1937", DWEuV, 1937, no. 255, 21 April, 1937, pp. 241-42.

3. BA, R43II/938b, "Rust eröffnet Hochschule für Lehrerinnenbildung, Koblenz", Deutsches Nachrichtenbüro, no. 1532, 10 November, 1937.

changed circumstances of the employment market had led to a change of attitude, although - in spite of attempts to prevent this - the number of students of both sexes training for the teaching profession had continued to rise sharply. The reason was that even before the war withdrew men from work into the armed forces, it had become apparent that there would soon be a shortage of teachers. Here, as in many other occupations, the only reserve of labour was among women. Therefore in order to encourage recruitment to the profession, it was announced at the end of 1939 that the number of special courses designed to prepare girls with only an elementary school education for entry to teacher-training colleges would be doubled, from 80 to 160¹. Involvement in the Second World War made serious a shortage of trained teachers which had thus even previously been a source of concern.

The Nazis' wholesale departure from their earlier policy of trying to restrict the entry of girls into teaching resulted in girls' constituting 42% of the colleges' student population in summer 1939, still in peace-time. But even this unprecedentedly high share was more than doubled once the war was under way, so that in summer 1940 the figure was 88%. And, unlike the universities, the colleges had not suffered a severe drop in absolute numbers: the 1940 figure was significantly larger than that of the year of the Hochschulinflation, 1931². The Government had really only continued the policies of the later Weimar period in imposing - or, at least, trying to impose - a limit on entry to over-full occupations and to the courses preparatory

1. "Aufbaulehrgänge für Mädchen von der Volksschule zur Akademie für Lehrerbildung", Die Frau, December 1939, p. 84.

2. Calculated from figures given in St.J.: 1939/40, p. 620; 1941/42, p. 645.

to these occupations. Practical considerations were equally at work in the volte-face which resulted in positive encouragement to girls to prepare themselves for a teaching career, given the increasing shortage of male candidates.

But doctrine was not to be abandoned altogether, especially when it could be reconciled with necessity; thus, retreat from one point of earlier Nazi policy, for practical reasons, was matched by insistence on the implementation of another. In January 1937 compulsory domestic science and needlework, to the extent of four hours each week in the first four semesters, were prescribed for all girl students at teacher-training colleges who planned to teach in senior schools. This was absolutely consistent with the Nazi aim of ensuring that all girls received a "womanly" education. But it should not be seen as an attempt to guide girls towards housekeeping rather than a profession. That it was an integral part of the anti-intellectualism of the Nazis and their emphasis on the virtues of practical skills is shown by another clause in the same order: this decreed compulsory courses in technical subjects for the male students at the same hours as the girls had their homecraft courses¹. This provision does, however, underline the Nazis' insistence on the separate functions of the sexes. But there was only a degree of actual segregation in the colleges, in spite of the Nazis' opposition to coeducation. Of the twenty-eight teacher-training colleges, exactly half were for students of both sexes, while eleven admitted only men, and three were exclusively for women².

1. IfZ, MA 1163, frame 95585, "Entwurf einer Reichsregelung der Ausbildung für das Lehramt an höheren Schulen", 16 January, 1937.

2. Homeyer, op. cit., p. K4.

The change in official policy, as exemplified by the new attitude to teacher-training candidates, became increasingly apparent and urgent from 1936 onwards. Early in 1937, Rust announced that in future school-leavers were to be encouraged to enter the universities in greater numbers, now that the Hochschulinflation was at an end, particularly in order to study scientific and technical subjects. The Four Year Plan, announced in September 1936, required a large number of chemists and engineers, and the general expansion which would result from it would mean a demand also for experts in every other discipline. In view of the urgency of the matter, Rust declared that senior schooling was to be shortened by one year¹.

It was quickly made clear that the new policies were not to be restricted to men. Even a few days before the Four Year Plan had been announced, the Thursday women's section of the Party's official newspaper, the Völkischer Beobachter, was entirely devoted to the justification of both an academic education and professional employment for women, insofar, it was emphasised as these would benefit the community. Parents were urged to make sacrifices, if necessary, to give a talented daughter the chance of higher education, so that the nation might benefit from her particular abilities. The idea of studying for one's own satisfaction was obviously still regarded as egotistic and decadent. The final judgment was: "It is wrong if to-day a gifted and capable girl takes the attitude that there is no point in studying because she will not find employment"².

1. BA, R43II/938b, "Die Inflation auf den Hochschulen beendet", Deutsches Nachrichtenbüro, no. 74, 18 January, 1937.
2. "Die Akademikerin von heute" and "Was Zahlen lehren", VB, 4 September, 1936.

The new course was dutifully supported by the representatives of the women's organisations, in the same way that the old ideas had been when they were in vogue. Trude Bürkner, national leader of the Bund deutscher Mädel, expressed the view that girls of ability who wanted to enter a profession ought to attend a university, since antagonism to the universities was "not in accordance with the attitude of the BDM"¹.

But in spite of official exhortations, student numbers continued to decline in the mid-to-late 1930s, and the proportion of girls in the student body also declined, until the outbreak of the Second World War. From a share of over 18% in the summer semester of 1933, girls' representation in the universities dropped to less than 15% in the winter semester of 1937-38, but revived to its highest point yet in autumn 1939, at 20%². This was, of course, at a time when the total number of students was greatly reduced by the removal of a large number of male students who, it was felt, could better serve their country in the armed forces in war-time. In the following terms³ student

1. Report in Die Frau, April 1937, p. 402.
2. Calculated from figures given in St.J.: 1934, pp. 534-35; 1938, p. 602; 1939/40, p. 615.
3. The traditional unit of the Semester, or Halbjahr, as the Nazis preferred to say, was abandoned in the autumn of 1939, and the Trimester was introduced as the division of the academic year, to allow greater flexibility in war-time, and particularly to condense the period required for the completion of a degree, by cutting down the long summer vacation. This was envisaged as purely a war-time expedient which would lapse with the conclusion of peace. An account of this is given in Hans Huber, Erziehung und Wissenschaft im Kriege, Berlin, 1940, pp. 18-20. Huber was a senior civil servant in the Reich Ministry of Education. In fact, the semester was reinstated still during the war, in 1941 (IfZ, MA 441/6, frame 2-757139, "Zur Lage an den deutschen Hochschulen im SS 1942", MadR, 16 July, 1942).

numbers rose again slightly, and the now favourable position of women improved even further, so that in the third term of 1940 they comprised almost 30% of all students in German universities¹.

Averaged figures, however, disguise the fact that girls' representation varied from university to university, and from subject to subject. Of the individual universities, two which were medium-sized, Marburg and Heidelberg, had a consistently high proportion of girl students, at over 20% for much of the 1930s. The general decline in representation, which was most marked between autumn 1936 and spring 1938, affected the larger universities of Berlin and Bonn and the medium-sized ones of Jena and Münster most, leaving girls at this time with a smaller share than they had enjoyed ten years earlier. While all the other universities showed a more favourable female representation throughout, it was at Würzburg alone that the percentage of girls in the student body remained above the high level of 1930 throughout the 1930s².

Girls were traditionally best represented in arts subjects, and from 1931 they occupied more than one-third of all places in arts faculties. In absolute terms, however, the number of girls studying medicine overtook that in arts, although their share of places in medical faculties remained for the most part around one-fifth. This trend certainly rendered groundless early fears that the Nazis would ban, or at least strongly discourage, the admission

1. Calculated from figures given in St.J., 1941/42, p. 640.

2. Conclusions drawn from figures given in St.J.: 1926, p. 401; 1931, p. 430; 1932, p. 426; 1933, p. 522; 1934, p. 534; 1935, p. 522; 1936, p. 544-46; 1937, p. 582; 1938, p. 602; 1939/40, pp. 615-16; 1941/42, pp. 640-41.

of women to the study of medicine. The other subject which showed a consistently high percentage of girl students was pharmacy, where they constituted between 20% and 30% of the total number of students throughout the 1930s, reaching the uniquely high figure of 52% in 1940: in no other subject did girls enjoy anything approaching this share at this time¹.

In contrast to the consistently strong position of women in arts, medicine and pharmacy, the favourable representation enjoyed by girl students in the sciences in the early 1930s was not maintained. From 25% in physics and mathematics in 1931, their share fell to the low level of 7% in the winter semester of 1937-38; in absolute terms, this meant a drop from almost 2,800 to a mere 99. The number of girl students in chemistry had always been much smaller than that in maths. and physics; at the beginning of the 1930s, their numbers were consistently around 500, in percentual terms between 15% and 17% of the total. A less spectacular, but still significant, drop in their numbers brought their share in 1937-38 to 8%, representing 208 girls². This development was, of course, the result of deliberate Government policy in the early years of Nazi rule. But by the time it became really effective, its consequences were giving rise to anxiety, in view of the need for skilled scientific and technical personnel which became pressing in the later 1930s. In November 1937 a writer in a women's magazine observed in an article entitled "Woman and Science" that the number of girl students in scientific

1. Calculations made from figures given in St.J.: 1932, pp. 426-27; 1933, pp. 522-23; 1934, pp. 534-35; 1935, pp. 520-21; 1936, pp. 544-45; 1937, pp. 580-81; 1941/42, p. 644.

2. Ibid.

subjects had "fallen alarmingly". She expressed the fervent hope that girls who had the ability and the application would turn to these subjects, since their contribution "to the serious and important work of scientific investigation is essential to-day"¹.

As the number of girl students in science faculties had been reduced as a result of Government policy, so the reversal of that policy led to a revival of girls' fortunes in this area. The position reached in the winter of 1937-38 was, as it transpired, their nadir, and the improvement in their representation from then on was given added impetus by the outbreak of war in September 1939, which led to even higher demands on scientists simultaneous with the withdrawal of men from civilian occupations into the armed forces. By 1940, girl chemistry students once more numbered over 500, with a share of 14%. At the same time, the number of girls studying maths. and physics rose to only 138, but these constituted 17% of all the students in this field, a very high proportion for subjects once specifically pronounced unsuitable for girls². As a writer in the Frankfurter Zeitung put it:

"The technical and scientific occupations, which were long regarded as a male preserve, are now once again open to women as chemists, physicists, engineers, biologists, on account of the shortage of male candidates"³.

The fortunes of girl students in both law and economics followed a trend similar to that observed in the sciences. In the law faculties, their numbers declined steadily and sharply from over 1,000 in 1932

1. Luise Raulf, loc. cit.

2. Calculated from figures given in St.J., 1941/42, p. 643.

3. Margaret Esch, "Die Aussichten des Frauenstudiums", FZ, 19 March, 1939.

until in winter 1937-38 there were a mere 59 girls¹. This was not caused wholly by Hitler's pronouncement that women should no longer be employed as judges and barristers, which came in 1936²; but his view would doubtless ensure that the downward trend in girls' numbers continued. In economics, the decline was less sharp, but equally steady: while over 1,000 girls had been studying economics in summer 1931, by 1937-38 there were only 194³. Again, the Nazis might have congratulated themselves on the effectiveness of their initial policy by the end of 1937, had circumstances not changed and the need for skilled personnel required to administer the new policies of the Four Year Plan paralleled the need for scientists to operate it. The value of women economists was explained and stressed in the various publications directed specifically at women⁴, and the number of girls in economics departments began to revive⁵.

In 1937, too, there was growing concern about the decline in the number of girl law students. Dr. Eben-Servaes, the legal expert in the National Women's Leadership and leader of the Nazi Association of Women Lawyers, sent a circular to her representatives in each Gau in August 1937, asking how many girl law students there were in the area and how far advanced their studies were, with a view to trying

1. Calculations made from figures given in St.J.: 1932, pp. 426-27; 1933, pp. 522-23; 1941/42, p. 643.
2. BA, R43II/427, letter from Bormann to Frank, 24 August, 1936. This will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5.
3. Calculations made from figures given in St.J., loc. cit.
4. See, e.g., "Was Zahlen lehren", in the supplement "Die deutsche Frau", VB, 4 September, 1936; Marilese Cremer, "Mitarbeit der Frau in der Wirtschaftswissenschaft", EK, November 1937, p. 11.
5. Conclusion drawn from figures given in St.J., 1941/42, p. 643.

to improve recruitment to law faculties. She explained that although Hitler's ban on women lawyers' being admitted to practice in the courts had closed this avenue to female graduates, there were many other areas in which their participation would be increasingly necessary¹. Girls' numbers in law faculties did revive from about this time², but not, apparently, enough, since a legal expert in the Party's section for academic affairs urged in August 1939 that "each girl with university entrance qualifications ought to consider whether she is suited to a legal career, rather than just medicine or teaching"³. This was the situation even before the outbreak of the Second World War; in the autumn of 1939, with young men called up for active service, the shortage of law graduates began to be acute⁴.

It is clear, then, that the reasons for encouraging girls to take up academic study in fields once pronounced unsuitable for them were purely practical. Equally practical reasons, however, lay behind the continuing discouragement, from 1936 onwards, of students from studying dentistry. The Ministry of the Interior announced on 3 August, 1936, that, until further notice, new students would not be allowed to sit the necessary State examinations because there was a large surplus of dentists. This decision was slightly mitigated after an agreement between the Ministers of Education and

1. HA, Reel 13, folder 253, "Rundschreiben Nr. FW 76/37", from Ilse Eben-Servaes to her representatives in the Gaue, 12 August, 1937.
2. Conclusion drawn from figures given in St.J., loc. cit.
3. IfZ, MA 205, NSDAP/HA-Wissenschaft, Dr. W. Donke, "Der Rechtswahrer", cutting from Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung, 11 August, 1939.
4. IfZ, MA 441/1, frames 2-750072/4, BziL, 13 October and 10 November, 1939.

the Interior, by which there would be a quota agreed between Frick and the leader of the dentists' organisation instead of a total ban on new entrants. Pfundtner, Frick's Secretary of State, still found it necessary to give in addition the warning that prospects in the profession remained poor and precarious¹. This concern about entry to dental faculties and to the profession itself was directed at men and women alike, without differentiation between them.

Girls had only ever formed a small minority in the Technical Universities, with an attendance figure of above 900 between 1931 and 1933, which dropped to 213 by winter 1937-38, while the number of male students declined much less drastically. Although these institutions prepared students precisely for those occupations deemed vital for the operation of the Four Year Plan, it was not until after the start of the war that the number of girl students revived significantly, passing the 800 mark at the end of 1940². This figure gave them a share of 9%, twice as high as the peak of their representation during the years of the Hochschulinflation. Even allowing for the withdrawal of a substantial number of male students for war service, it is therefore evident that girls were responding to the encouragement given to them from 1936 onwards to engage in the study of scientific and technical subjects.

It was in fact only the increased attendance of girls at the universities that kept student numbers from falling to negligible

1. "Aufhebung der Sperre des Neuzugangs zum zahnärztlichen Studium und zum Dentistenberuf", DWEuV 1937, no. 200, 22 March, 1937, p. 187.
2. Calculated from figures given in St.J.: 1932, p. 429; 1933, p. 525; 1938, p. 602; 1941/42, p. 641.

proportions during the war. Young men did continue to study when they were on leave from their units, but in summer 1942 it was reported that the return of many of them to the army was followed by an actual rise in numbers at some universities, because of the large intake of girls. In Berlin at this time, girls' numbers had increased by 20%, compared with the winter semester of 1941-42, and for the first time they actually constituted a majority of the students in three faculties there. At Freiburg, there were altogether more girls than men at this time. Medicine and the arts subjects continued to be the fields most favoured, but the sciences also benefited, so that at Freiburg, Göttingen, Halle, Berlin and Würzburg there were more girls than boys studying science. This general development was considered desirable, since the exodus of men from the professions and academic training had left a great shortage of recruits in these fields, which would have to be made good by admitting women¹.

Even if there had been no Four Year Plan and no Second World War, girl students and graduates would have been essential to the Nazi order; a system based on élitism requires a corps of leaders. Rust acknowledged this when he expressed the desire to found universities in Germany on the model of Oxford and Cambridge, which provided the leading element in British public life². The network of organisations which the Nazis built up to some extent before, and much more intensively after, the Machtübernahme needed leaders who were intelligent and educated, as well as devoted Party hacks. And this

1. IfZ, MA 441/6, frames 2-757139-41, op. cit.

2. "Rede des Preussischen Kultusministers Rust bei der Einweihung der landgebundenen Hochschule für Lehrerbildung in Lauenberg, 24. Juni 1933", Hiller, op. cit., p. 43.

applied to women as well as men, given the Nazis' view that the functions of the sexes should be kept separate. The initial experience in 1933 of having a man in direct charge of the women's organisations had been a singularly unhappy one, and after this the day-to-day running of them had been left in the hands of the women themselves, even if ultimate authority rested with the Party's male leadership¹. Thus, trained personnel was required for the Frauenwerk, the Women's Section of the Labour Front, the BdM, the Women's Labour Service and the NSV; there was even a place for women in research institutes². An example of this last category was Hildegard Behr, who received her doctorate in February 1937 and went on to become a research worker in a genealogical records office³. The leader of the Nazi student organisation, Dr. Scheel, boasted that the new Germany had opened up employment prospects for women in a wide variety of fields requiring an academic education, without departing from the Nazi principle of guiding women into jobs suited to the female nature⁴. There was some justification for this claim, although it became increasingly clear in the 1930s that the concept of work suitable for women was rather elastic.

The Nazis were well aware that the existence of an academic élite whose members were destined to occupy the leading positions might lead to the formation of a compact group within the community which would constitute an obstacle to national unity and to complete

1. This is discussed in detail in Chapter 6.

2. Gustav Adolf Scheel, "Aufgaben und Erziehungsform des deutschen Studententums", Deutscher Hochschulführer, 1938, p. 12.

3. BDC, Hildegard Behr, "Lebenslauf, 27. November 1937".

4. Gustav Adolf Scheel, loc. cit.

control by the Party. Male students were brought into close contact with contemporaries from all walks of life once military service was introduced in 1935. In addition, from 1933 the Labour Service, which had formerly been purely voluntary, became compulsory for male students¹. Then in March 1934 an order was issued which stipulated that all school-leavers of both sexes who sought admission to higher education must first perform six months' Labour Service². This requirement fulfilled three important functions. In the first place, it was an effective way of reducing student numbers immediately, in 1934, when this aim was a top priority. In addition, those young people endowed with intellectual gifts were to be educated to respect the value of manual work, and therefore to respect those of their fellow-citizens who performed it. Finally, a cheap reserve of labour was automatically permanently available for those jobs - particularly on the land - which were regarded as vital but which were unattractive to those seeking long-term employment. If the nature of the work performed by boys and girls tended to differ, the general principles behind the student Labour Service applied to both equally, so that the complaint could not be made that girls were being discriminated against by being excluded, not that they were being privileged by being admitted to study straight from school³.

The urgent desire to increase student numbers in the later 1930s was clearly in conflict with the equally urgent desire to maintain a

1. Otto B. Roegele, op. cit., p. 153.

2. BA, R43II/936, "Das Diensthalbjahr der Studenten", cutting from Vossische Zeitung, 9 March, 1934.

3. It is unfortunately not possible to give a detailed description of the nature of the girls' Labour Service - in spite of the availability of material - because of limitations of space.

a reserve of cheap labour for agriculture. The universities, at any rate, were determined that they should have priority, and once the war had begun and student numbers dropped sharply they encouraged girls to believe that the Labour Service requirement no longer applied. This led to some confusion, and gave rise to queries about whether it was still in force¹. Hierl was already in the process of modifying the scheme so that in 1940 the period of service would be tailored - in fact, reduced from twenty-six weeks to twenty-two - to allow intending students to fit it in between leaving school in spring and starting at university at the beginning of the autumn term. When this change was announced, it was stressed that performance of Labour Service remained a qualification for entry to university². The Government thus endeavoured to have the best of both worlds, namely a substantial period of Labour Service rendered by each aspiring student and as many recruits as possible provided for university study. This manoeuvre signalled the final retreat - long overdue - from the policy of using compulsory Labour Service as an instrument for limiting student numbers.

Fear of academic élitism, one of the motives behind the student Labour Service, did not prevent the continued existence, and indeed the growth, of student organisations, since these were now designed rather to involve the students as a group in the life of the

1. BA, R36/1928, letter from the Oberbürgermeister of Herford to the Deutscher Gemeindetag, 8 February, 1940.

2. IfZ, MA 205, NSDAP/Hauptamt Wissenschaft, "Der Arbeitsdienst der Studierenden", cutting from Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung, 23 February, 1940.

Homeyer, op. cit., p. E9.

community than to be exclusive. Matriculation automatically made each student a member of the Deutsche Studentenschaft (National Union of Students), in which the Nazis had had a majority since 1931¹. The various associations and clubs, which had been exclusively, and often unattractively, male bastions were obliged to dissolve by 1935², to be replaced by a single body, the Nazi Students' Association (NSDStB), whose local branches were responsible for the "political education" - that is, indoctrination - of students³. Party membership was a condition of entry to the NSDStB⁴, and from 1936 NSDStB members had also to belong to one of the Party's special organisations. For girls, this meant joining either the BdM or the NS-Frauenschaft⁵.

In keeping with the Nazi desire to separate the sexes for most purposes, a special section for girls, the Arbeitsgemeinschaft der nationalsozialistischen Studentinnen (ANSt), had been created in 1927 within the NSDStB⁶. Its aim, according to Scheel, was "to involve the girl student in the work of the university in a manner

1. Report in Deutscher Hochschulführer, 1939, p. 87.
2. BA, R43II/938, "Gemeinschaft studentischer Verbände", Deutsches Nachrichtenbüro, no. 157, 29 January, 1935, and "Auflösung studentischer Verbände", Deutsches Nachrichtenbüro, no. 1599, 21 October, 1935.
3. BA, Slg.Sch., 279-1, letter from Lammers to Derichsweiler, 1 July, 1935.
4. Ibid., "Die Neuorganisation des NSDStB", n.d. (?late 1932).
5. Ibid., letter from the Reich Student Leader to all offices of the NSDStB, 22 April, 1936.
6. Anna Kottenhoff, "Aufgaben und Ziele der Studentinnenarbeit", Deutsches Frauenschaft, 1938, p. 81.

compatible with her womanliness"¹. Membership of the ANSt was theoretically voluntary, but the conclusion of an agreement between it and the BdM, to the effect that all members of the latter who were students must join the ANSt, achieved the aim of winning a large membership. At a time when student numbers were being restricted, a girl who joined the BdM had a better chance of being admitted, and so a large number of female students automatically became members of the ANSt. It was estimated that in 1936 65% of all girl students were members, and that the figure rose to 75% in the following year. This meant that the majority of girl students were obliged to participate in their first three semesters in group discussions for the purpose of "education to comradeship", another euphemism for political indoctrination².

The ANSt was only a small part of the organised activity available to - and to some extent compulsory for - girl students. Like their male counterparts, they were obliged to participate in sporting activities in their first three semesters, in keeping with Hitler's demand in Mein Kampf³. The Frauendienst (Women's Service), too, was compulsory, for the first six semesters. This involved training in air-raid protection, first aid and signals - areas with ominously martial connotations⁴. Then it was recommended that in their

1. Gustav Adolf Scheel, Die Reichsstudentenführung, Berlin, 1938, p. 28.
2. Anna Kottenhoff, op. cit., p. 83.
3. "Hochschulsportordnung", DWEuV 1935, 30 October, 1934, no. 4, pp. 6-10.
4. Mathilde Betz, "Einsatz der Studentinnen im Frauendienst", Deutsches Frauenschaffen, 1939, p. 103.

Gisela Rothe, "Die Studentin im Frauendienst", VB, 18 October, 1934.

spare time - if, it is tempting to suggest, they had any left - girl students should help out in the welfare and charitable organisations, the NSV and the Winterhilfswerk (Winter Relief Scheme), thus performing useful community service, and at the same time associating with women and girls from all walks of life. To demonstrate even further their consciousness of belonging to a national community which superseded all divisions of class or occupation, the girls were encouraged to perform "voluntary" stints of work in factories or on the land, in vacation, to allow women workers an extra paid holiday, and it is clear that a small minority of idealistic girls responded enthusiastically¹. This was not the end of the extra-mural activity expected of girl students: they were urged to interest themselves in the work of the Nazi women's organisation, to maintain contact with German students abroad, and to attend meetings to which women who did not have a university education were invited, to give them an idea of what girl students did in their work and in their organisations².

The creation of a great variety of activities and organisations for girl students confirms that what the Nazis opposed was not the existence of universities and the presence of women in them - as had

1. Lieselotte Machwirth, "Politische Erziehung durch den ANSt", VB 11 December, 1935.

2. "Zur Zusammenarbeit der nationalsozialistischen Studentinnen", Die Frau, April 1935, pp. 437-38.

"Was eine Studentin erzählt", VB, 4 September, 1936.

Inge Wolff, "Hochschulgemeinschaft deutscher Frauen", FK, November 1937, inside of front cover.

Limitations of space prevent a fuller discussion of the activities mentioned in this paragraph.

at least partly seemed to be the case in 1933 - but rather academic freedom and independent-minded intellectuals. The overriding Nazi aim was to stamp out the last vestiges of "liberal" and "internationalist" culture, and to replace it with a truly German, National Socialist approach to learning. As Scheel proclaimed at the 1937 Party Congress, "We do not want a scholarly National Socialism, but a National Socialist scholarship"¹. Scheel was clearly oblivious to the fact that this aim was bound to be a contradiction in terms.

As far as girls were concerned, the ANSt leader in 1935, Lieselotte Machwirth, explained that there had never been opposition in Nazi ranks to the girl student per se. The Party had indeed deplored the attendance at university of girls from wealthy backgrounds, who were attracted by student social life but not by academic study; equally abhorrent to the Party was the feminist blue-stocking, whose raison d'être was to outshine her male colleagues, by any means². It was these "undesirables", along with those disqualified for racial or political reasons, who had had to be removed from the universities; once this was achieved, there was a warm welcome for the girl student who worked alongside her male counterpart as "the comrade...in the common task of achieving a National Socialist reconstruction of the university"³.

This welcome was emphasised when in 1938 the thirtieth

1. Quoted in Otto B. Roegele, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

2. Lieselotte Machwirth, *op. cit.*

3. Lili Michaelis, "Studentinnen an der Arbeit", DS, July 1936, p. 326, used these words; others expressed similar sentiments, e.g. Scheel, *loc. cit.*, Anna Kottenhoff, "Das Studium als völkischer Einsatz", Deutsches Frauenschaffen, 1939, pp. 97-103.

anniversary of the admission of women to Prussian universities was made an occasion for celebration. Tribute was paid to the tenacity of those, particularly Luise Otto and Helene Lange, who had struggled so long for this aim, without, it was stressed, sacrificing their humanity and womanliness. Ironically, these were the very women who had founded and built up the Women's Movement which the Nazis had attacked so often both before and after 1933. To try to resolve the implicit contradiction, the Nazis claimed that the Women's Movement, worthy in its initial phase, had fallen under the influence of "Jewish women's rights' advocates" and a "liberal-individualistic leadership" during the Weimar Republic. Fortunately, the story continued, the situation had been saved by the Nazis, and the consequent reorientation of the universities had been towards the "only valid standpoint: the good of the community". The result was that the girl student now found support instead of hostility among the female population as a whole, and played a valuable part in the cultural life of the nation¹. The emphasis placed on these last points was doubtless aimed at reassuring girls and their parents that university study was not only acceptable but actually highly desirable for those girls who had academic ability; this reassurance was essential if the desired increase in student numbers in the later 1930s was to be achieved, after the doubts sown by the Government itself in earlier years about the validity of intellectual pursuits.

From the very start, then, considerable interest was taken in

1. Else Boger-Eichler, "Rückblick auf die Entwicklung des Frauenstudiums in Deutschland", FK, July 1938, p. 3.

girl students by the Nazi Party. The first objectives with regard to them applied equally to male students, however; these were the elimination of those unacceptable to the Party for any reason from higher education, and the reduction of student numbers at a time when they were inflated out of all proportion to the employment opportunities available to graduates. Other restrictions necessitated by this situation generally applied to students of both sexes in equal measure, although there were some exceptions. But the fundamental point is that girls continued to be admitted to higher education in relatively large numbers. Given this, the Nazis' chief aim was to ensure that those admitted were made aware of the responsibility they owed the nation. Then, while girl students were to be the comrades of their male colleagues, they were also to be closely involved in those activities in which German women from all sections of society took part, to remind them that what distinguished them above all else was not their intellect but their gender - or, as the Nazis preferred to say, their "womanliness". As the unemployment situation eased, however, and the shortage of skilled personnel became apparent and then acute, the idea which had found currency in earlier Nazi theory - that high intelligence and womanliness were incompatible - was categorically denied.

C. Girls' Senior Schooling in the Third Reich

While they were prepared to retreat some distance from earlier theory, the Nazis never departed from their insistence on the importance of the traditional "womanly" occupations and the necessity of training girls for these. The emphasis was therefore to be shifted from the Weimar practice of giving domestic science instruction

only to those girls who were clearly not academically talented to a system where all girls were given a grounding in the tasks involved in running a home, and where the academically-inclined were treated as the exceptions they undoubtedly were. The official view was as follows:

"The great majority of German girls find the fulfilment of their lives as housewives and mothers, in the family. The variety of tasks which they must perform demands a fundamental training in all branches of domestic science.... The vital work of domestic science demands the education of women whose attitudes, ability and knowledge correspond with the needs of German life in the family and in work. Work in a household is so varied and wide that only a thorough training in fundamentals can lead to the essential raising of standards"¹.

Hedwig Förster, a school-teacher who became an adviser in the Reich Ministry of Education, expressed a similar sentiment:

"Only a very small proportion of our girls is ever really suited to purely academic study in a university.... Immeasurably greater is the number of those who later as wives and mothers, and also as career women, must and want to play a leading part in the special areas of women's work and women's culture"².

These views were not so very different from those expressed by the Prussian Ministry of Education in the 1920s³; the difference was that the Nazi Government was determined to ensure that all girls received a basic minimum of training in homecraft and child-care as an integral, indeed a vitally important, part of their normal schooling.

There was already considerable provision for this kind of

1. "Einrichtung von Haushaltsschulen (Berufsfachschulen)", DWEuV 1939, no. 85, 1 February, 1939, pp. 86-87.

"Einrichtung von Frauenfachschulen", DWEuV 1939, no. 87, 1 February, 1939, pp. 95-96.

2. Hedwig Förster, "Die Frauenschulen", DMd, 1934, no. 7, p. 317.

3. "Einjährige Frauenschulen", BF, July/August, 1932, p. 5.

education in the elementary and middle schools, as well as in a variety of vocational schools, although this did not deter the Nazis from castigating the Weimar "system" both before and after 1933 for neglecting domestic science training. It was, however, true that few such facilities were available in the senior schools; this was a situation which the Nazis were pledged to alter radically. The easiest way to do this was to increase the number of Frauenschulen, which constituted the separate branch of senior schooling devoted to intensive domestic science education, and to integrate them fully into the senior school system; this would enhance their status in relation to the academic senior schools, and would facilitate a degree of uniformity which had been lacking because of the differences in the development of the Frauenschule in the separate Länder¹.

In the Nazis' first few years of power, much was achieved in terms of upgrading the standard and status of the Frauenschule. One-year courses were provided to give a general education to girls who were leaving senior school before taking the Abitur (university qualifying examination), while three-year courses were designed to train girls for a variety of occupations particularly suitable for women and not requiring a university degree; these included teaching in primary, technical, art and music schools, youth leadership, and the obvious careers directly connected with domestic science. From Easter 1935 the three-year courses included, besides their normal

1. Homeyer, op. cit., p. A16.

"Bekanntmachung von 3.7.35", Amtsblatt des Bayerischen Staatsministerium für Unterricht und Kultus, no. IX 27 409, p. 211.

theoretical and practical training in domestic science, subjects specifically geared to the Nazi Weltanschauung: racial "science", nordic culture, the history of the German peasantry and the development of National Socialism were compulsory for all¹. The rationalisation of the Frauenschule courses was, as it turned out, only an interim measure; the final aim was to incorporate them fully into the girls' senior school system. This was finally achieved when the entire system was reformed, by an order published in January 1938.

Given the Nazis' outspoken opposition to the entire education system of the post-war years, it might have been expected that they would concentrate on framing and effecting reforms to suit their purposes as quickly as possible after taking power; if the consolidation of political power, the alleviating of economic problems and rearmament were the top priorities, the education of the young was nevertheless a vital area for a regime which would not tolerate dissidence. From 1933-37, however, the Government contented itself with a large number of piecemeal measures designed to modify the existing system immediately, until their comprehensive reform had been fully worked out. Several of the interim measures reflected the Nazi view that education should prepare German girls for their role as wives and mothers. For example, among the qualifications girls required for admission to a Prussian teacher-training college, as announced in January 1935, was evidence of proficiency in domestic science, needlework, sport and music². For the senior schools, it was decreed at Easter 1935 that the time-table for each class must

1. "Ziel und Aufgaben der 3-jährigen Frauenschule", DMd, 1934, no. 8, p. 337.

2. "Bessere Berufsaussichten für Volksschullehrer", VB, 4 January, 1935.

include two hours of needlework every week. This was to be at the expense of one hour each of English and mathematics, or French, if mathematics had already been reduced by an hour to accommodate biology¹. With the Nazis' obsession about all matters of race and heredity, it is not surprising that biology was made compulsory for all school-children. As Friederike Matthias, the national spokeswoman on girls' senior schooling, put it: "There is an obvious need for a basic knowledge of biology in girls' senior schools, for the cultivation, development and preservation of our race"².

Fräulein Matthias was also of the opinion that the need to include more gymnastics, biology, needlework and German in the girls' curriculum would mean a corresponding reduction in the time given to science, mathematics and foreign languages³. But by October 1935 Rust obviously felt that such a development was - however desirable - not practicable, since he announced that the increased demands of academic work in the higher grades of girls' senior schools meant that in future there would be no room for homecraft in their time-table. To compensate for this volte-face, Rust added that it was still felt that no girl should leave a senior school without knowledge of, and proficiency in, basic domestic science. Therefore the family of a girl in this position, especially the mother, should - as he claimed had been the case in former times - educate the daughter systematically in all important household tasks. This was the only apparent

1. "Nadelarbeitsunterricht in Lyzeen", DWEuV 1935, no. 198, 3 April, 1935, p. 143.

2. Friederike Matthias, "Grundsätzliches zur Reform der höheren Mädchenschule", Reber-Gruber, op. cit., p. 30.

3. Ibid.

alternative to keeping girls at school for an extra year - to be devoted to domestic science - which would be contrary to the Nazi desire to take every chance to encourage early marriage and motherhood. Rust claimed that academically gifted pupils should have no difficulty in coping with household instruction in addition to their normal school work, and that any problems which might arise could be solved by co-operation between parents and school. To ensure compliance with his order, he ordered that from Easter 1937 girls should be admitted to the upper classes of senior schools only if they could provide evidence of familiarity with the simplest household tasks¹.

From the start, the Nazi Government had felt that the precondition of effective reform was the elimination from the senior schools of those they considered unsuited to an academic education. Already before 1933 there had been talk of limiting entry to senior schools as well as universities², and the Nazis had included the senior schools in their law of 25 April, 1933, to combat the Hochschulinflation³. As they had succeeded in reducing student numbers - further than they wished, in the event - so they also achieved a reduction in the number of senior school pupils, by a number of tactics. The low war-time birth-rate continued, of course, to affect senior school numbers until 1937, and was a major factor in the drop in the senior school population by 100,000 in the years 1931-34, out of a

1. "Aufnahme in die wissenschaftlichen Oberstufen der höheren Mädchenanstalten", DWEdV 1935, no. 582, 11 October, 1935, p. 478.

2. Christoph Führ, op. cit., pp. 28-29.

3. "Gesetz gegen die Überfüllung deutscher Schulen und Hochschulen", RGB, 1933 I, 25 April, 1933, p. 225.

total of over three-quarters of a million in 1931¹. The failure of the birth-rate in the post-war years to match the pre-war figures compounded this.

At first, however, the losses were sustained equally by both sexes, so that the girls' share remained around 37% in the first half of the decade. Then the girls sustained a slight loss percentually, to leave them with a share of 34.5% in 1938². The reason was the all-out campaign launched by the Nazis against private schools, particularly the Roman Catholic schools of Bavaria, which challenged the Government's authority in the vital area of educating the young³. Certainly, the boys' private schools suffered from this campaign, but the numbers involved were much less significant since there had always been far more private schools for girls. In the State senior schools girls' representation had, by 1938, returned to as high a point as it had achieved in 1931 and 1932, after a slight fluctuation in the middle of the decade, while their absolute numbers, also, were higher than they had been since 1932⁴.

The slightly more favourable position of girls in senior schools in relation to boys in 1938 was the direct result of an order issued late in 1936 which shortened boys' senior schooling by one year, because of "the operation of the Four Year Plan as well as the

1. Conclusions drawn from figures in Deutsche Schulerziehung, 1940, p. 117.

2. Ibid.

3. A brief account of this campaign is to be found in Eilers, op. cit., pp. 85-97.

4. Deutsche Schulerziehung, loc. cit.

recruitment needs of the army"¹. The withdrawal of some 20,000 boys at the end of their twelfth school year, instead of at the end of the thirteenth, in 1937 and 1938 had a small, but noticeable, effect on girls' share in the senior schools², and created an anomalous situation where for almost two years girls were actually receiving more education, of a kind at times designated unsuitable for them, than were boys. Rust was aware of the implicit contradiction here, and was quick to point out that this measure was merely a temporary expedient which would have to suffice until the promised thoroughgoing reform of the senior schools was prepared³.

The temporary nature of this arrangement was underlined by an announcement made by Trude Bürkner in February 1937, to the effect that a reform of the school system was imminent which would relieve girls of the obligation to undergo the kind of education to which they were not suited. This did not mean, she emphasised, that girls' education would be reduced to the notorious "3 K's", as foreigners claimed; the Government was well aware that that would be totally insufficient. The schools were rather to prepare girls to be fitting comrades for their future husbands, by giving them some training in politics, economics and culture⁴. In other words, the most important element in girls' schooling, as in boys', was to be instruction in the National Socialist view of nationally significant issues, and, indeed, of life as a whole.

1. IfZ, MA 387, frame 725473, letter from Hess to the SS leadership, 12 December, 1936.

2. Deutsche Schulerziehung, loc. cit.

3. BA, R43II/938b, report from Deutsches Nachrichtenbüro, no. 474, 19 April, 1937.

4. "Die Erziehung der Mädchen im BDM", FZ, 20 February, 1937.

At last, on 29 January, 1938, Rust published his Neuordnung des höheren Schulwesens, the reform of the senior schools. In it, the first point of substance was: "For important reasons of population policy I have shortened the nine-year period of senior schooling to eight years"¹. This, then, formalised the provision already made for reducing boys' schooling, and at last brought girls into line with it, although they did not have military service to perform. A substitute was, however, quickly produced, in the form of Göring's project of a year of compulsory service on the land or in domestic work for girls seeking employment for the first time, from March 1938².

The Government's order of priorities was thus made perfectly clear: while the desire to encourage early marriage, to promote population growth, was rivalled by the urgent need for cheap labour on the land and in domestic service, these two aims could be largely reconciled by relegating education to third place. Naturally, it was denied that this was what was happening: enshrined in Rust's act was the remark that the shortening of schooling must not result in a lowering of standards, and that the Abitur, in its traditional form, would remain the goal of senior schooling. There was also the warning that those who were unable or unwilling to meet the new requirements would have to be removed from the senior schools. The new provisions were not felt to be too harsh, since, it was stressed, in the Nazi State the school was only one branch of the educational system³;

1. "Neuordnung des höheren Schulwesens", DWEuV 1938, 29 January, 1938, p. 46.

2. This has been discussed in Chapter 3, pp. 168-70.

3. DWEuV, op. cit., pp. 46, 48.

in the case of girls, the other branches were the BdM and the Labour Service¹. These agencies could work in harmony, it was felt, since they were all ultimately under the same leadership, all working in complementary ways towards the same goals.

In the new plan for the senior schools the eight-year course was to be a unified whole. Therefore the so-called "mittlere Reife", an intermediate certificate instituted before the First World War and obtainable by those wishing to leave with a qualification after seven years, was to lapse. The senior pupils were to continue to be scrutinised closely, with a view to eliminating those who had not the ability to make a success of the full course. It was stressed that in structure and aims, schools for boys and schools for girls were to be the same². But the plans for the curricula for the senior schools, which accompanied the new order, showed that in content the education given to the two sexes was to differ considerably, chiefly to the effect of weakening the academic constitution of the girls' time-tables. This was, of course, only what had been promised, to a greater or lesser degree since 1933.

Girls' education, stressed Rust, should not be merely a poor imitation of boys', which was what post-war developments had made it. The Nazi theory of the separate functions of the sexes meant that "the natural difference between the sexes makes itself apparent even in childhood...so that the schooling of girls to an awareness of their responsibility to the nation and the State must develop from its own special roots"³. The result was that the complicated and cumbersome

1. Grete Brenner, "Fragen der höheren Mädchenbildung in Deutschland", FK, April 1939, p. 6.

2. Ibid.

3. DWEuV, op. cit., p. 51.

multiform system of schooling, with its variations in the separate States, was dismantled, and a national senior school structure established in which there was a basic type of girls' school which was markedly different from the corresponding basic type of boys' school.

After four years at the Volksschule (elementary school) - or three for talented pupils, to achieve a further shortening of schooling if possible - boys proceeded to the first five years of the senior school, which were the same for all; they then had the choice of languages or science as their speciality for the last three years, which meant that there was more time for concentration on the chosen field, but that there was also still some instruction in the other. Biology was not included in the scientific option since it was already compulsory. There was, naturally, a strong emphasis also on German and History, but it remained possible for boys to study the classics in an institution which continued to be called the Gymnasium. True to their antipathy to the influence of a foreign culture, the Nazis made it plain that this form of senior school was to cater only for a small minority of the school population¹.

The girls followed the same pattern as the boys, with three or four Volksschule years followed by five general senior school years, before specialisation in one of two courses. In the general years, the girls' schooling was substantially the same as the boys', with one significant exception: four hours of Latin each week in the third, fourth and fifth years of the boys' schools were matched by compulsory needlework and a little extra music for the girls. With Latin still a requirement for some university courses, this omission in the girls' curriculum could work to their disadvantage at the higher levels of

1. Ibid.

education. The decisive difference between boys' and girls' schooling came, however, in the last three years. The two options open to the girls were the language stream and the homecraft stream, so-called because the difference between them was that in the former no domestic science, besides needlework, was taught, while in the latter there was compulsory English for two hours a week, but the chance to learn no other foreign language. More positively, the language course allowed girls to choose two foreign languages - one of which might be Latin - in addition to compulsory English, while the domestic science course gave instruction in all areas of activity involving nursing, social work, work with young children, and household tasks. Both streams included instruction in science and mathematics to an extent that was greater than that provided for boys in the language stream, but significantly smaller than that for boys specialising in science in the boys' schools¹. This meant that no provision was made in the girls' schools for those who wished to specialise in science and mathematics, which would again put them at an immediate disadvantage in the universities. This measure had doubtless been attractive at a time - when reform of senior schooling was first projected - when there was graduate unemployment; but by the time it was promulgated, even before it became effective, it was out-of-date and potentially disastrous.

The homecraft course was hailed as an educational form which would be the only one of its kind in the world. It was made clear that it was not intended for "less gifted" pupils who were unable to cope with the academic course, since its scope was very wide and would make considerable demands on the participants. Not only were the girls

1. Ibid., pp. 54-56.

to receive instruction in the theoretical aspects of everything that "the State must expect from the National Socialist woman in the family and in the community"; there was also to be a strong element of practical work performed outside the school, in crèches and kindergartens, on farms and in families. With this stream an integral part of the girls' senior school system, there was no longer the need for the separate institution of the Frauenschule, but the name was to be retained for this course as a matter of convenience. The wide choice of occupations for which this course would qualify girls was emphasised, the only ones not included being those for which a further period of study in a university or college was required¹.

Even if the curricula proposed for girls can be seen to contain features disadvantageous to girls aiming to proceed to higher education, the formalising of the structure of the girls' schools signified official recognition of the need to provide courses with a high academic content for a considerable number of girls, and not just for a minority of unusual cases. This was precisely what the hard-liners in the Party had hoped to eliminate, on ideological grounds, but which had proved necessary in the light of the country's need for skilled personnel in all branches of administration, welfare and professional life.

As usual, the new measure was accompanied by explanations and justifications in the press. The Völkischer Beobachter reported in March 1938 that many people were asking the question: "Why prepare girls for a career which they will just give up when they marry?" Although the Party had done much to encourage this old-fashioned idea, its official newspaper now remarked that neither parents nor children seemed to have given any thought to the possibility that some girls

1. Grete Brenner, op. cit., pp. 6-7.

would not marry. It was not, stressed the Völkischer Beobachter, that girls should fail to prepare themselves for the tasks they would face if they did become wives and mothers; now, however, the old bourgeois days were past when girls were expected to sit at home waiting for a husband. The need was for girls who, whether they were to marry or not, were prepared to play their part in the service of their country, namely by training for an occupation, especially in those areas where the growing shortage of labour was most acute¹. Similar propaganda appeared in girls' and women's magazines, but it was obviously felt that exhortation would not be sufficient to prevent a number of girls from choosing to remain idle when they left school instead of training for an occupation: for this reason, the year of compulsory domestic or farm service, introduced by Göring in February 1938, was at first restricted to those girls who had never been employed, while signing on at an Employment Exchange became compulsory for all school-leavers². But those girls proceeding to courses in higher education were exempt from these provisions, since intending students were obliged to perform Labour Service before commencing their studies, and they were not, in any case, proposing to remain idle.

One of the points made firmly in the Neuordnung des höheren Schulwesens was that "coeducation contradicts the National Socialist conception of education"³. With attempts at progress towards a coeducational system of senior schooling consistently frustrated before

1. "Warum immer neue Forderungen an die Mädchen?", VB, 10 March, 1938.

2. "Einführung des weiblichen Pflichtjahrs", VB, 22 February, 1938.
See above, Chapter 3, p. 170.

3. DWEuV, op. cit., p. 46.

the Machtübernahme, it must have been expected that an unequivocal policy of segregation would be enforced after it, given the strength of Nazi opposition to coeducation as a logical part of the Party's belief that the sexes were different in nature and had separate functions to perform. Certainly, some of the States showed willingness to put segregationist theories into practice: Saxony passed a law on 9 October, 1933, which stated that, other than in exceptional cases, girls must attend only girls' schools¹.

The Prussian Ministry of Education followed suit on 12 February, 1934, with an order that

"as a matter of principle girls are not to be admitted to boys' schools if there is in the district a middle school or a girls' senior school at which girls can receive an education more suited to their nature".

Exceptions to this harsh ruling, which implied that middle schooling was adequate for the needs of the female sex, required the personal permission of the Minister; but it was at least conceded that girls already attending boys' schools should be allowed to complete their education unaffected by the new order². The Minister evidently realised that it would be far easier to allow this than to try to force the 12,872 girls attending boys' schools in Prussia to change. These girls constituted almost 5% of all pupils in boys' schools, and about 5% of all girls receiving senior schooling, so that while their numbers were relatively small, they were by no means negligible³.

1. "Aufhebung der Gesetze über die Gemeinschaftserziehung an höheren Schulen (usw)", Sächsisches Gesetzblatt, 1933, order of 9 October, 1933, pp. 175-76.

2. "Erlass des Ministers für Wissenschaft, Kunst und Volksbildung vom 12.2.1934", DMAd, 15 May, 1934, p. 144.

3. Report in DMAd, 15 February, 1934, p. 48.

It should, however, have been an easy matter for a totalitarian Government to prevent girls from being admitted to boys' schools in the future.

But in spite of the Government's open opposition to coeducation, especially at the senior level of schooling, and its measures designed to eliminate it, it continued throughout the 1930s. The 35,628 girls at boys' senior schools throughout the country in 1931 constituted 6.3% of the pupils at boys' schools. Although their actual numbers declined to 31,102 in 1935, their percentual share in fact rose fractionally, to 6.4%; and two years later, in 1937, an increased absolute number of 33,752 gave them a share of 6.8%, which, if only a marginal rise, was a rise nevertheless¹. Therefore it is clear that attendance by girls at boys' senior schools was not being phased out in the way envisaged by the Government, and that, contrary to Rust's orders - which applied to the whole of Germany once he became Reich Minister of Education in 1934 - girls were continuing to be admitted to these schools.

In the 1938 reform, then, the Government was reiterating opposition to coeducation which had already been expressed on several occasions, but which had not been backed up by effective action. The Neuordnung des höheren Schulwesens did, however, concede that there might still occasionally be special circumstances in which girls could be admitted to boys' schools, although on no account were boys to attend girls' senior schools². The number of boys

1. Deutsche Schulerziehung, loc. cit.

2. DWEuV, loc. cit.

likely to be affected by this ruling was, in fact, minimal: in 1931 there were 849, constituting the tiny fraction of 0.3% of the total number of pupils in girls' senior schools; in 1937, the numbers had in fact risen to 1313 and the proportion to 0.6%, but as such the problem remained insignificant¹. In the order it was stressed that the differences between the two sexes necessitated forms of schooling in which the emphases would be different, with the stipulation that in those cases where girls did attend boys' schools provision should be made for their "special needs", which were not described². This proviso was enlarged six months later in another measure which laid down that separate toilet facilities and a needlework room were to be made available for girls in those boys' schools where there was consistently a large number of girls³. Such a provision in an official order was an admission that coeducation had not been, and was not being, stamped out, although in theory it was anathema. An order of 18 January, 1939, even urged that, if there was a large enough number of girls at a boys' school, a domestic science class should be formed, so that attendance at a boys' senior school would not deprive them of some elements of a "womanly" education⁴.

One reason for girls, or their parents, flying in the face of stated Government policy here was undoubtedly that there was a growing fear before 1938 that even talented girls would be handicapped

1. Deutsche Schulerziehung, loc. cit.

2. DWEuV, loc. cit.

3. "Mädchen an Jungenschulen", DWEuV 1938, 27 August, 1938, no. 477, pp. 429-30.

4. "Mädchen an Jungenschulen", DWEuV 1939, 18 January, 1939, no. 46, pp. 56-57.

by attending girls' schools in which, it had been predicted, the academic content would be reduced in favour of domestic science. And after the publication of the 1938 reform, it was clear that girls would have a better chance of achieving university entrance in the boys' schools, which provided more teaching of science and Latin than the girls' schools. In order to try to block one loophole, the Government ordered in August 1938 that girls in the lower grades of boys' schools should not be given Latin lessons, in line with the absence of Latin in the first five years at girls' schools. This meant that girls hoping to proceed to the higher grades of the boys' schools would have to make up what they had missed in the way of Latin classes by means of private tuition¹. But the exigencies of war rendered the provision of any special teaching for girls at boys' schools impracticable, and the announcement abolishing this in January 1940 also stated that girls were to be allowed to study Latin on the same terms as boys, and to be educated in classes with boys in all subjects except sport².

It appears, then, that in spite of the fact that segregation of the sexes was a firm tenet of Nazi policy and although the Nazis were indisputably in control of the Government of Germany from 1933, a measure of coeducation continued throughout the 1930s, to be finally accepted as necessary in war-time. There can be little doubt that the war-time expedients were envisaged as being purely

1. DWEuV 1938, loc. cit.

2. "Sonderunterricht für Mädchen, die Oberschulen für Jungen besuchen, DWEuV 1940, 12 January, 1940, no. 53, p. 76.

temporary, but what is amazing is that coeducation had not been stamped out long before the war. After all, the Nazis did not have to face the problems of the 1920s, when the political parties were deeply split on this issue, and when there was no central agency for the administration of education. In addition, large-scale dismissals of teachers and administrators for political reasons¹ meant that much potential opposition to Nazi policies at the local level was removed at the start. Therefore it must be concluded that, in spite of the constant reiteration of their complete opposition to coeducation, the Nazis themselves failed to enforce their policy in such a way that it was effective. The result was a continuation of the stalemate of the 1920s, which prevented progress towards a system in which schools were open to boys and girls equally. Thus, if a number of girls did attend boys' senior schools, this did not alter the fact that these remained schools which were primarily intended for boys, and that there were other institutions intended specifically for girls.

The Neuordnung des höheren Schulwesens was scheduled to take effect from the autumn of 1938, although it was accepted that there would have to be at least a short transition period. This meant that in the first year some allowances, and the provision of extra tuition in certain subjects, if necessary, would be made for the senior pupils, who would be the most affected by the change-over². But already during this first year, even before Germany was at war, it was clear that the new system would present difficulties. The propagation of the homecraft stream in the girls' schools was not consistent with the

1. This is discussed in Chapter 5.

2. "Neuordnung des höheren Schulwesens", DWEuV 1938, 29 January, 1938, p. 47.

the need to encourage more girls to aim for university study, which was apparent even before 1938. The result was that as early as January 1939 Rust issued an order to the effect that girls who were awarded the certificate of the homecraft stream and who wished to proceed to university would have to sit a further examination in history, mathematics, physics and two languages to be eligible for admission¹.

This topsy-turvy arrangement was the outcome of the stubborn insistence of the Minister of Education, and of Party ideologues who did not have to operate practical policies, that girls should be encouraged to choose a "womanly" education instead of an academic one, even when events were already proving them wrong. The final contortion was to come in August 1939, when it was ordered that, as from Easter 1941, the certificate of the domestic science course would entitle girls to enter university in the same way as the certificate of the language course, although the former's academic content was significantly weaker than the latter's². Given this contradictory and capricious attitude by the Government to girls' education, and also, by implication, to the standards of university study, it is hardly surprising that there were complaints voiced in 1942 about irresponsible behaviour on the part of many girl students, since the new entrance requirements meant that many would be very ill-equipped indeed to cope with academic study which had been designed to cater for students who had been far more adequately prepared for it. This was a very serious state of affairs indeed at a time when girls were forming

1. "Berechtigung der Reifezeugnisse der Oberschule für Mädchen, hauswirtschaftliche Form", DWEuV 1939, 24 January, 1939, no. 77, p. 80.
2. "Berechtigung der Reifezeugnisse der Oberschule für Mädchen, hauswirtschaftliche Form", DWEuV 1939, 23 August, 1939, no. 467, p. 463.

a high proportion of the student body¹.

This, then, was the Nazi answer to the "mistaken development" of education during the Weimar years. Their stated aim at the start had been "to reduce the number of senior pupils and students to the extent that basic education is afforded and the needs of the professions are satisfied"². Certainly, it had been sensible, even necessary - doctrinal reasons apart - to proceed in the matter of restricting or delaying university entrance at a time of severe graduate unemployment, a policy advocated by the last democratic Governments but, because of their inherent difficulties, unimplemented by them. It was probably a combination of ideological absurdity, given the Party's basic anti-intellectualism, and administrative inefficiency, given the mediocrity of its leading figures, that led to this policy's being pushed far beyond the desirable limit until it was realised that the process would have to be not only halted but even reversed.

As far as girls' education was concerned, it was desirable that more attention should indeed be paid to domestic science, which was too often despised in intellectual circles and given no place in the academic senior schools. But the switch from overemphasising academic talents to overemphasising "womanly" education and the virtues of motherhood was a grotesque overcompensation, and bore no relation to the actual needs of the German economy as the 1930s wore on, so that there was to be a consistent shortage of qualified personnel to the end of the decade and, to the nation's disadvantage, during the war years. This was still true after the volte-face in autumn 1936,

1. IfZ, MA 441/6, frame 2-757141, op. cit.

2. "Rechtsentwicklung", Jahrbuch des Deutschen Rechts, 1934, p. 24.

when official pronouncements began to stress the importance of encouraging academically talented girls to go to university, because even at this time the school system was being prepared to divert girls from academic study. Even so, Hitler must have been greatly removed from reality to be able to say, in 1942, that "girls...have received education in accordance with the principles of National Socialism"¹. Certainly, girls had been constantly bombarded with Nazi propaganda about the role of women in society. But this could not change the situation that the Nazis themselves created. For, in the end, it was their own policies, the expansionist ones which were inevitably given precedence over the enforcement of the Party's educational and social policies with regard to women, which rendered impossible the already difficult task of implementing points of doctrine once considered immutable.

1. Hitler's Table Talk 1941-44, London, 1953, no. 223, 20 May, 1942 (Midday), p. 491.

1. In earlier drafts of this chapter, I referred to the "Hitler's Table Talk" as "Women and the Professions in Germany, 1941-44", in Hitler's Table Talk, ed. by John H. van der Horst, London, 1974, pp. 117-118.

CHAPTER FIVE¹Women and the ProfessionsIntroduction

There is probably no area which has proved to be a more sensitive indicator of a society's attitude to the status of women than the professions - that is, those occupations for whose exercise a degree or a diploma is required. The first prerequisite for admission to the professions is, of course, the availability of opportunities for higher education; thus, prospects for women in the professions in Germany after the Great War should have been bright, with girls admitted to every German university before the war and the rapidly increasing number of girl students in the 1920s. But, at the same time, women had been admitted to full membership of the civil service and the legal and medical professions, as well as to university lectureships, only after the war; and married women had then been admitted to professional positions for the first time. The tradition of male dominance in the professions and prejudice against women achieving positions of responsibility and influence persisted throughout the 1920s into the 1930s, while the straitened economic situation which dogged Germany during the Weimar years restricted the room for manoeuvre available to those who would have been pleased to promote the interests of the extremely small minority of women who aspired to a professional career. The depression also gave the National Socialists the excuse to try to put theory into practice by circumscribing the activities of professional women, as of employed women as a whole. But, again similar to the situation in the

1. An earlier draft of this chapter was published as: Jill McIntyre, "Women and the Professions in Germany, 1930-1940", Anthony Nicholls and Erich Matthias (ed.), German Democracy and the Triumph of Hitler, London, 1971, pp. 175-213.

employment market generally, the theory soon proved impractical, and the policies which had priority in the Nazi State necessitated warm encouragement to women to enter professional occupations.

Some progress was, however, made in the 1920s, including the achievement of equal pay for women in the public service - whether as teachers, lawyers, doctors, lecturers or civil servants - as a result of Article 128 of the Weimar Constitution. This was in line with practice after the war in the majority of European countries¹, although it was not until 1955 that equal pay for women in the civil service and the teaching profession was introduced in Great Britain². But the obstacles to full acceptance of women in the professions remained formidable. Speaking of the Federal Republic in the early 1960s, one campaigner of the 1920s could still complain of prejudice against the employment of women on university staffs and as senior civil servants³. And an official report published in 1961 asserted:

"That up to now women have had so small a share in the qualified professions is in singular contrast to the fact that they have exactly the same right to high-school and university education as men, and that the percentage of girl students is high.... Observations indicate that, in spite of the legally-embedded equality of rights, women in professional employment have in no way the same chances as men"⁴.

1. Vera Douie (ed.), The Professional Position of Women: a World Survey immediately preceding World War II, London, 1947, pp. 20-38.
2. Keessing's Contemporary Archives, vol. X, 1955-56, "Equal Pay for Women in the Non-industrial Civil Service and for Women Teachers", 25 January, 1955, p. 14165.
3. Marie-Elisabeth Lüders, "Aus der Frauenarbeit des Reichstags 1919-33", Ernst Deuerlein (ed.), Der Reichstag. Aufsätze, Protokolle und Darstellungen zur Geschichte der parlamentarischen Vertretung des deutschen Volkes, 1871-1933", Bonn, 1963, p. 113.
4. "The Position of Women", Germany Reports (Bundesrepublik publication), Bonn, 1961, p. 679.

These words might well have been written thirty years earlier, to describe the situation that obtained in the Germany of the Weimar Republic, and to imply the disillusionment felt by those who had imagined that legal equality would necessarily bring a striking degree of progress in its train.

A. Progress and Prejudice in the Weimar Republic

There were two main strands in the development of women's position in the professions after the Great War. The first concerned the female sex as a whole, and was conditioned by factors such as the relatively recent admission of women to the universities, the losses sustained by men during the war¹, and general attitudes to the equality of opportunity for women written into the Weimar Constitution. The other element was the more specific one of the employment of married women, which became a contentious issue across the occupational spectrum after the war², but nowhere more so than in the professions. Those who had opposed the admission of women to the professions on the grounds that they were neither intellectually nor physically suited to such demanding and responsible work³, were reluctantly prepared in the 1920s to accept the appointment of a select number of dedicated career-women - who were by definition unmarried - to meet the demands of the feminist lobby. But there remained many

1. For example, on 17 June, 1918, The Times reported that "during the war 14,722 German teachers have been killed or are missing".

2. This is discussed in Chapter 3, pp. 126-31.

3. Kirchhoff, loc. cit.

Russell, loc. cit.

Report by Maximilian Harden in Die Zukunft, 24 August, 1918, pp. 224-32.

men, and also women, who were opposed in principle to the employment of married women in professional positions, not least because of the decline in the birth rate after the war. Studies of the birth rate among married women graduates which appeared during the 1920s provided little consolation for those who supported unconditionally a woman's right to work: it was shown that, on average, the families of women in professional positions were marginally larger than those of men in similar jobs, but that both these groups had a lower birth rate than any other section of the community¹. The dropping birth rate, therefore, continued to be used as ammunition against the professional Doppelverdiener.

While the campaign against the married woman in a professional job gathered increasing momentum, as positions became ever more scarce in the later 1920s, it seemed as if the position of women generally in the professions was becoming more secure. The early governments of the Republic, and Hermann Müller's government in 1928-30, were generally well-disposed towards the cause of women's advancement, although those of the more economically stable middle years, when the Social Democrats were out of office and the Centre Party was dominant, were not inclined to accelerate the progress initially made. Still, if there was no woman Cabinet Minister in Germany during the 1920s and 1930s, the same was true of other European countries, with the exceptions of Britain and the Soviet Union. And women were appointed to senior positions at both the national and Land level². These were, of course, outstanding exceptions, and while a number of other women were appointed to minor

1. Agnes Martens-Edelmann, "Frauenstudium, Ehe und Mutterschaft", Die Frau, November 1936, pp. 84-89.

2. The detail of this is given in Chapter 1, pp. 23-24.

official positions, it is important to emphasise that there was only ever a tiny handful at the top. Nevertheless, given the barriers of prejudice which women had to face in winning full admission to professional positions, the steady progress achieved in the 1920s, particularly in teaching and medicine - no doubt partly because of male casualties in the war - was considered reasonable by the moderate feminists, even if it was deemed totally inadequate by the radical feminists and excessive by conservatives.

With the removal of all obstacles to the practice of medicine by women, they became active in all areas of the profession after 1918, in ever-increasing numbers¹. By May 1927 there were 1,757 women doctors who constituted 4% of the total number, and by the end of 1930 the figures had risen to 2,648 and 5.6%². At the same time, the number of women teachers increased, as also did their proportion to men in the profession: in the primary schools their share rose to 25% in 1927, compared with the pre-war figure of 21%; in the middle schools the rise was from 32% to 50%; and in the girls' senior schools they continued to constitute about three-quarters of the total number³. Women were also admitted to the staffs of universities and colleges, and in the summer of 1927 there were thirty-one women lecturers in the universities, who formed the tiny proportion of 0.6% of the total number⁴. The increasing number of girl students

1. Mathilde Kelchner, Die Frau und der weibliche Arzt, Leipzig, 1934, p. 14.

2. St.J.: 1928, p. 486; 1931, p. 406.

3. Ibid.: 1914, pp. 322-24; 1924/25, pp. 355-57.

4. Ibid., 1928, p. 512.

throughout the 1920s, however, suggested that there would be more women appointed to university lectureships in the relatively near future. Probably the biggest breakthrough for women in the professions came, however, in October 1922, when three women were admitted as junior barristers to a Berlin court, thus entering one of the most sacrosanct of male preserves. But although their numbers had increased to twenty-five by September 1930, women made little progress beyond the lower levels of the legal profession¹.

Like their male colleagues, professional women joined together in organisations. Some became members of groups which had male members, such as the Institut für Soziale Arbeit, but the large number of professional organisations exclusively for women testifies to an alignment chiefly by sex, and therefore to the maintenance of a degree of solidarity among the feminists who had campaigned before the war for the admission of women without discrimination to the professions. This point was reinforced by the association of the women's professional organisations with the other women's clubs - whether of a vocational, a social or a charitable nature - in the annual Women's Congress².

The strongest and most senior of the women's professional groups was the Allgemeiner Deutscher Lehrerinnenverein (General Union of German Women Teachers), which had been founded by Helene Lange in 1890. By 1930, it had more than 40,000 members, from a variety of localities, denominations and types of school³. Just as the majority of the pre-war

1. "10 Jahre weibliche Richter", Die Frau, January 1933, p. 249.

2. BA, Nachlass Katharina von Kardorff, no. 28, p. 9, "Der XI. Frauencongress in Berlin, 17.-22.6.1929: Ehrenbeirat der Verbände".

3. Puckett, op. cit., p. 178.

women's organisations had become corporate members of the BDF, so the organisations of women doctors, teachers, civil servants, lecturers and students had their own federation, or "Dachorganisation", namely the Deutscher Akademikerinnenbund¹. There were also separate groups which remained outside this combine, chiefly the denominational teaching associations like the Verein Deutscher Evangelischer Lehrerinnen², and the Verein katholischer Lehrerinnen³. The identity of the women's professional organisations was often asserted in the publication of an independent journal; for example, the magazine of the women doctors, Die Ärztin, paralleled the men's Der Arzt⁴. A late-comer to the field of women's professional groups was the Vereinigung Deutscher Hochschuldozentinnen, founded in 1927 by Professor Rhoda Erdmann, for the small but growing number of women lecturers in universities and colleges⁵.

But if progress was being made and if professional women were demonstrating their new self-assurance in their organisational activity, there was still much left to be desired, as a DVP member, Martha Schwarz, pointed out in 1932. In a report on women civil servants in the Prussian Ministry of Education in 1931 - choosing the area in which women were professionally best represented and the Land "which has been governed for over seven years by the parties allegedly well-disposed towards women's interests, the SPD and the

1. Clifford Kirkpatrick, Woman in Nazi Germany, London, 1939, p. 50.

2. BA, R2/1291, letter from the committee of the VDEL to the Reich Minister of Finance, 7 June, 1923.

3. Eilers, op. cit., p. 76n.

4. Report in FiS, May 1929, p. 4.

5. "Die deutsche Frau in Lehre und Forschung", FK, February 1938, p. 3.

Democrats" - she showed that women were still very under-represented; of forty-five senior officials in the Ministry, only three were female. In the local educational authorities of Prussia the story was much the same, or, in some cases, worse. Martha Schwarz found it particularly objectionable that only sixty-seven of the 346 heads of girls' senior schools were women, although she added that women should be promoted only if they met the necessary requirements. Equally, she added that it was not her view that large numbers of women should suddenly be found high-ranking positions. Nevertheless, the sad truth seemed to be that the left-wing government which had taken office in Prussia in 1925 had failed to improve on the position it inherited, in the gradual manner favoured by the moderate feminists¹.

The governments of the Reich and the Länder found themselves faced with two conflicting demands: Article 128 of the 1919 Constitution stated specifically that

"All citizens without distinction are eligible for public office in accordance with the laws and according to their abilities and achievements. All discriminations against women in the civil service are abolished".

But, at the same time, there was a desperate need to cut public spending and, therefore, to reduce the number of civil servants - whether they were administrators, teachers, doctors or lawyers. The least painful way to achieve this seemed to be to try to persuade married women in the public service to resign, and as an emergency measure - which eventually turned out to be a useful precedent - the Reich Minister of Finance announced that married women civil servants

1. BA, R45II/64, M. Schwarz, "Frauen in der preussischen Unterrichtsverwaltung", Frauenrundschau, 11 February, 1932.

in the postal and transport services would receive a lump-sum payment if they resigned during the chaotic financial year 1922-23¹. But if the national government had agonised over this decision, some of the Land governments had no compunction whatsoever in blatantly ignoring the provisions of Article 128; it was left to the courts to reverse measures enacted to discriminate against married women teachers in both Bavaria and Württemberg².

Opposition to married women gainfully employed outside the home concentrated on women in professional jobs for two reasons: firstly, it was regretted but recognised that many working-class women were forced to earn a wage to supplement their husband's income if the family was to be supported; secondly, it was conceded that many married women, particularly in agriculture, in the textile trade and in some clerical jobs, were doing work that would not normally be done by men, but it was claimed that professional women could easily be replaced by men, and might well be preventing a suitably-qualified man from finding a post. In some cases, complaints were made about the employment of married women by single women who felt that they should have priority. In June 1923 the committee of the Union of German Evangelical Women Teachers wrote to the Minister of Finance asking him to provide a sum of money as severance pay to encourage married women to retire from the profession since, said their President, many would do so if they could afford to. She regretted that the provision making dismissal obligatory on marriage for women teachers had been revoked,

1. BA, R2/1291, letter from the Württemberg Minister of Finance to the Reich Minister of Finance, 31 March, 1923.

2. Auguste Steiner, "Zur Berufsarbeit der verheirateten Frau", BF, February 1933, p. 6.

and complained that, for one thing, married women could not devote the necessary energy and attention to their job, and, for another, that there was hardship among single women who were qualified teachers but could not find a position while married women worked¹.

This was no isolated instance: in March 1923, Christine Teusch, a Centre Party Reichstag deputy, had asked the Minister of Finance to authorise the payment of a sum of money to married women who retired from a professional post; but the Minister had regretfully refused because, he said, the money was not available².

Even in difficult times, the goodwill of the more liberal Reich Governments was not in doubt. As early as 1920, guidelines were drawn up for regulations to define the status of married women in the public service, to bring the Civil Code into line with the Constitution³. By 1929, however, this had still not been achieved⁴, and, although he regarded the matter as one of major importance, Severing - as Reich Minister of the Interior - was obliged to admit in September 1929 that the majority necessary to pass such a measure in the Reichstag could not be constructed. Instead, he planned to incorporate it into his projected comprehensive civil service law⁵.

1. BA, R2/1291, letter from the committee of the VDEL to the Reich Minister of Finance, 7 June, 1923.
2. Ibid., letter from the Reich Minister of Finance to Frau Teusch, May 1923 (exact date not given).
3. Ibid., letter from the Reich Minister of the Interior to the State Secretary in the Chancellery, 10 July, 1923.
4. Ibid., letter from Severing to the other Reich Ministers et al., 12 July, 1929.
5. Ibid., letter from Severing to the other Reich Ministers et al., 21 September, 1929.

But Müller's Government had demonstrated its good faith by instructing Hilferding - the Reich Minister of Finance - to make proposals for increasing the number of places available for women administrators in the Reich Ministries in his budget plans for 1929. The aim was to open an avenue to promotion for women clerical workers who had obtained a qualification which made them eligible for the higher civil service¹. This measure was duly accepted by the Reichstag as a part of the 1929 budget².

But even as the Government was making this demonstration of goodwill, the economic situation was worsening, and with it prospects for all aspiring professional people. Already in the autumn of 1929 the Reich Ministries were again searching for ways of reducing staff, to save money, and were increasingly coming to the conclusion that this could be most conveniently achieved by offering married women the financial incentive of severance pay if they resigned voluntarily³. In the teaching profession, the situation was grim, with 29,000 qualified teachers without jobs in Prussia alone⁴, and by the time the economic crisis hit Germany there were far more applicants for professional positions of every kind than there were jobs available⁵. The outlook continued to grow only blacker in 1930

1. Ibid., letter from Hilferding to the State Secretary in the Chancellery, 19 November, 1928.

2. Ibid., notice issued by section IB of the Reich Ministry of Finance, undated (? end of March, 1929).

3. Ibid., letter from the Minister of Transport, Dr. Rocholl, to the German Railways Corporation, 5 October, 1929.

4. Christoph Führ, op. cit., p. 29.

5. Georg Gothein, "Die wirtschaftlichen Aussichten für Industrie und Mittelstand", Deutsche Handels-warte, 1929, no. 4, p. 90, found in BA, Nachlass Gothein, no. 79.

and 1931, as the Government's need to retrench grew more urgent, and as the number of students - who would soon join the queue for professional jobs - rose to record proportions¹. A speaker at the 1932 conference of the Bavarian Union of Women's Associations claimed that women were being even worse hit by the deteriorating situation than men², and indeed in the teaching profession it seemed as if this was true: while there were 15,000 male candidates waiting for vacancies among 13,600 male teachers with permanent jobs in Prussia in 1931, there were as many as 7,500 qualified women teachers waiting for vacancies among the mere 1,900 permanent female members of school staffs³.

The deepening of the economic crisis led to an intensification of the attacks already being made on the Doppelverdiener, especially in the professions. In response to this tendency, a Government Commission, appointed in 1931 to investigate ways of solving - or at least mitigating - the unemployment problem, particularly recommended a much wider resort to the practice of offering "compensation" to those professional married women who retired from the public service. Reporting this, the radical feminist Grete Stoffel observed that "There does not yet exist a law which entitles or obliges the State or a private employer to dismiss female civil servants or clerical workers just because they are married". But, she predicted pessimistically, it seemed likely that a measure on these lines would form a part of the new law being contemplated on the basis of the Commission's report⁴.

1. See above, Chapter 4, p. 190.

2. Report in BF, July/August 1932, p. 2.

3. Report in BF, February 1932, p. 6.

4. Grete Stoffel, "Die Arbeitslosigkeit und die Frauenarbeit", FiS, August/September 1931, p. 5.

The feminists were convinced that the Government's attitude towards the employment of women, and particularly women in professional positions, was at best negative, and probably hostile¹. But the Brüning Government was actually extremely unwilling to discriminate against any group, including married women, and it was with reluctance that, at the end of 1931, with the situation still worsening, it sounded out the Reichstag to find if support could be secured for a bill which would permit the dismissal of married women civil servants. The response was positive². As the Government prepared its bill, feminists of all shades of opinion began a campaign to oppose it. Indeed, they had a degree of reason on their side: the figures that were bandied about - based on the 1925 census - showed that the furore concerned at most 7,000 out of a total of 3,700,000 employed married women; thus the retirement of even all married women civil servants would make a negligible contribution to solving the unemployment problem, even if it provided jobs for a few more male graduates³.

If the feminists found this gesture by the Government alarming, they were even more concerned by the way that the campaign against the Doppelverdiener seemed to be broadening into an attack on the general position of women in employment, particularly in responsible,

1. "Die Lage der Frau in den geistigen Berufen", BF, July/August 1932, p. 2.

2. BA, R45II/64, Lotte Garnich, "Krise und Frauenberufsarbeit", Frauenrundschau, 4 February, 1932, pp. 1115-17.

3. Ibid.

Grete Stoffel, loc. cit.

Maria Hellersberg, "Die Berufsarbeit der Frau", BF, February 1932, pp. 1-2.

well-paid positions. One example of this was a proposal made in the Prussian Landtag by the Centre Party - with the support of leading Catholic women - that employed single as well as married women should be replaced by men¹. Further, the increasing strength of the National Socialists, evidenced in the Reichstag elections of 1930, and then 1932, gave rise to fears that the situation could become very much worse than it seemed already to be. Lida Gustava Heymann warned that in the Third Reich women would be forced to revert to their role in Imperial days, which she characterised as that of child-bearing machine and maidservant of men, with all political rights revoked². A more prosaic, but equally grim, picture was painted by a DVP supporter, who predicted that under the Nazis women would lose not only their political rights but also the right to work in the public service. She was able to support her gloomy forecast with references to Mein Kampf, the Nazi Party Programme, and speeches by Nazis, including Alfred Rosenberg and Hermann Esser³.

Nazi propaganda indeed justified fears of this nature, but, as was to become increasingly apparent, Nazi propaganda did not always represent the Party's ideas faithfully. In fact, the Nazis recognised that many women were obliged to earn a living, often against their will⁴. These, at least - including perhaps some of the 128,000

1. Grete Stoffel, loc. cit.

2. Lida Gustava Heymann, "Nachkriegspsychose", FfS, March 1931, pp. 1-2.

3. BA, op. cit., Elisabeth Schwarzhaupt, "Die Stellung des Nationalsozialismus zur Frau", Frauenrundschau, 6 April, 1932, p. 1169.

4. Alice Rilke, "Die erwerbstätige Frau im Dritten Reich", NS-Frauenbuch, Munich, 1934, p. 65.

Angela Meister, "Die deutsche Industriearbeiterin", Munich University dissertation, 1938, pp. 26-27.

professional women¹ - could be lured back into the home by family allowances and the marriage-loan scheme. But it would be much more difficult to persuade those women in the professions who looked on their job as an absorbing career that their true vocation lay within the sphere of the home and children, to the exclusion of all else. They would therefore have to be coerced into accepting their "natural calling", in which they would find true happiness. So ran the theory². It was recognised, however, that not all women would marry - something which was obvious, in view of the fact that there were two million more women than men in Germany throughout the inter-war period - and so those who did not would have to find employment in occupations concerned with women, children and domestic matters. In this way, they would at least be able to fulfil their maternal instincts at second hand³. The nation would thus benefit, too, from the best use of their womanly talents: "Helfen, Heilen, Erziehen" (helping, healing, training) were women's functions, allotted to her by nature⁴. The Nazis, therefore, perhaps unintentionally, implicitly recognised the need for women in the medical and teaching professions and also in

1. St.D.R., vol. 451, section 3, p. 49.

2. "Die Geschlechter im Dritten Reich", Fränkische Tageszeitung, 17 April, 1934.

3. Siber, op. cit., pp. 26-27.

Lydia Gottschewski, Männerbund und Frauenfrage, Munich, 1934, p. 71.

An account of the role played by Paula Siber and Lydia Gottschewski in the Nazi women's organisation is given in chapter 6.

4. Report in VB, 17 March, 1934.

skilled social work of all kinds¹.

To this extent, there was to be little for the Nazis to change. The results of the census conducted in May 1933 showed that half of all professional women were engaged in teaching at various levels, with another 10% involved in occupations connected with health and welfare. The other most significant employer of women in the professional grade was the Ministry of Posts, with almost 34,000, or more than a quarter of all women in this category. This group might well be a target for Nazi discriminatory measures; and there could be little doubt that the Nazis would view with greatest disfavour the 10,000 women employed as officials at the national and local level². In both absolute and relative terms, the number of married women in this group was small: a mere 4,000 professional married women in 1933 constituted less than 4% of the total category; by contrast, more than one-third of all employed women were married, with the result that almost one-third of all married women were employed³. Thus, any campaign against this section of working women could, even at its most effective, have only very marginal results for the labour market as a whole.

Some of the Nazis' work was, however, done for them before they came to power, as the reduction in the number of married women in the professions from up to 7,000 in 1925 to 4,000 in 1933 - the census

1. G. Vogel, Die deutsche Frau, III: im Weltkrieg und im Dritten Reich, Breslau, 1936, p. 6.

Elfriede Eggenger, "Die organische Eingliederung der Frau in den nationalsozialistischen Staat", Leipzig University dissertation, 1938, pp. 37 and 47.

2. St.D.R., op. cit., p. 37.

3. Ibid., p. 76.

coming before Nazi legislation in this matter - shows. Although it had shown some reluctance to yield to the demand to single out the Doppelverdiener for dismissal to ease the critical situation in the civil service and the professions, the Brüning Government at last followed up the rather tentative moves it had made in this direction with a bill designed, euphemistically, to define "the legal status of women civil servants"; it was hardly in the spirit Severing had envisaged for his projected bill, although, ironically, it bore a similar title¹. Now, in May 1932, Groener, as Reich Minister of the Interior, introduced a measure which provided that married women employed in responsible positions by the State would not only always, understandably, be permitted to resign at their own request, but might also be dismissed without such a request, if "their financial maintenance seemed from the size of the income in their family to be guaranteed in the long term". The banks and the railway authorities were empowered to adopt a similar regulation. Three months' notice had to be given, and reasonable compensation paid; but this severance payment cancelled all existing pension rights. A provision was included to allow for the possible re-employment of a woman who left her job as a result of this measure, if there was a dramatic change for the worse in her financial situation². But this promise could not disguise the stark fact that the Constitution was, in the context of equal rights for women in the public service, a dead letter.

1. BA, R2/1291, letter from Severing to the Reich Ministers, 12 July, 1929.

2. "Gesetz über die Rechtsstellung der weiblichen Beamten", RGB, 1932 I, 30 May, 1932, pp. 245-46.

The law clearly found favour in some quarters; the Minister of Posts lost no time in conferring with the Minister of the Interior about the possibility of applying it to his sphere of control, and on 7 June, 1932, issued his own version of it. This provided for the more positive approach of circulating all married women officials in the postal service with a written enquiry as to whether they wished to submit their resignation. Those who did not resign were to be required to declare the income of their family as a whole and the occupation of their husband, so that the arbitration committee established by the Minister could decide if these women really needed their income; if not, they were to be dismissed, although, again more positively, the order of dismissal was to be revoked if their financial position ceased to be secure¹. The Minister of the Interior approved of these regulations to the extent that he recommended the adoption of them by the Reich agencies which had not yet proposed such a measure, to achieve national uniformity².

The reaction among the feminists was, naturally, one of opposition, but they were by no means united. A stinging attack on the law of 30 May came from Dr. Kläre Schoedon in the radical feminist magazine Die Frau im Staat. In an article entitled "Sic transit gloria..." she claimed that Article 128 of the Constitution had been torn to shreds and that a married woman no longer had any right to independence, so dependent had she now been made on the ability and the desire of her husband to support her. Dr. Schoedon poured burning scorn on the clauses which were designed to mitigate the measure, and

1. BA, R43II/427, "Ausführungsanweisungen der DRP", 7 June, 1932.

2. Ibid., letter from Freiherr von Gayl to the Reich Ministers and authorities, 15 June, 1932.

then turned on those who had passed it into law, the men and women of the political parties in the Reichstag. The Centre Party had been the bill's sponsor, and its view that the place of a married woman was in the family and not in employment was faithfully reflected in the measure, wrote Kläre Schoedon; the views of the Nationalist Party were sufficiently similar to the Centre's in this area to guarantee the bill its support. Only the Communists were prepared to vote against it, insisting in debate that it amounted to an outright denial of equal rights for women; their declared adherence to this last principle did not deter the Social Democrats from voting for the bill, as did the Nazis - understandably enough, given their view that the ideal place for women was in the home¹.

Apart from the Communists, only one party did not support the bill, and that was the tiny Staatspartei, the former DDP; its members, including Gertrud Bäumer - who ought to have been leading a parliamentary campaign against the bill, given her position in the women's movement - merely abstained. Indeed, Gertrud Bäumer spoke against the measure in debate, prophetically calling it "a dangerous precedent", but it was her docility, and that of the other women deputies, in the name of Party solidarity, which disgusted Kläre Schoedon most of all, particularly the way in which Helene Weber of the Centre Party - herself a high-ranking civil servant in the Prussian Ministry of Welfare² - had spoken in favour of the measure. The other source of deep concern to Kläre Schoedon was the fact that

1. Kläre Schoedon, "Sic transit gloria...", FiS, July 1932, pp. 5-7.

2. Horkenbach, op. cit., p. 766.

the dismissal of the eight or nine hundred women who might be affected by the law would do more to damage the rights of women than to benefit the unemployment situation, the purpose it was supposed to serve¹.

But there were clearly enough women, both in and outside the Reichstag, who were prepared to accept this measure to ensure that there would be no concerted opposition from the ranks even of interested women. Marie-Elisabeth Lüders, who was a Staatspartei deputy at the time, has since written that a hard campaign was fought in the Reichstag against the law, but that some of the women's professional organisations approved of this "arbitrary measure"². Certainly, those affiliated to the Churches - the stand taken by the Union of Evangelical Women Teachers in 1923 against the employment of married women is worth remembering here³ - did much to bear out Kläre Schoedon's fear that the measure would succeed in setting the unmarried against the married woman civil servant⁴.

The law did, in any case, have one redeeming feature. As a result of a campaign waged by the Union of Women Post and Telegraph Officials, it was written into the law that a married woman who had to retire because of "secure" financial circumstances would be re-employed "if at all possible" if her husband ceased to be able to provide for her. This, claimed Dr. Auguste Steiner, was an improvement on the

1. Kläre Schoedon, op. cit., pp. 6-7.

2. Marie-Elisabeth Lüders, op. cit., p. 122.

3. See above, p. 262.

BA, R2/1291, letter from the VDEL to the Reich Minister of Finance, 7 June, 1923.

4. Kläre Schoedon, op. cit., p. 6.

situation which had obtained for a year, in which married women were the last candidates to be considered for a job, regardless of their circumstances. In addition, she said, there were women in responsible positions who were pleased enough to give up work in return for a lump-sum payment, particularly young women who planned to marry, and for whom the cash payment would be more useful than the future prospect of a steady income. But none of this, said Dr. Steiner, could really justify the attack on women's rights which the law signified, and it was on these grounds that both the BDF and the Union of Civil Servants condemned it¹.

B. Purge and Co-ordination, 1933-34

If things had looked bad for those who favoured equality of opportunity for women in 1932, the appointment of Adolf Hitler as Chancellor on 30 January, 1933, added the new dimension that many had feared. The Nazis' strong anti-intellectualism had repercussions for professional people as well as for students and academically gifted schoolchildren. They accused highly-educated men and women of a selfish individualism which was antithetical to the Party's principle of "Gemeinnutz vor Eigennutz", the subordination of self-interest to the general good². The Party's suspicion of intellectuals is illustrated by the tight control which it maintained over the professions. Of the eighteen "works communities" of the German Labour Front, into which all workers of hand and brain were drawn in the summer of 1933, only number thirteen, that of the liberal professions, was

1. Auguste Steiner, op. cit., pp. 4-6.

2. Point 24 of the Nazi Party Programme, found in Hofer, op. cit., pp. 30-31.

under the direct supervision of Robert Ley, the leader of the Labour Front¹. In addition, the individual groups of doctors, engineers, teachers, civil servants, lawyers, lecturers and students came under the control of offices created specially for them within the organisation of the NSDAP itself; in this way, they were, again, directly subordinate to Ley, this time in his capacity as Chief - under Hitler - of the Party Organisation². In this respect, the professions were unique among all occupational groups³.

The Nazis moved with breath-taking speed: within a month of the Machtübernahme Gertrud Bäumer lost the job she had held in the Ministry of the Interior for almost fourteen years, and other women in the higher civil service were quickly dismissed as well⁴. Since there was as yet no legislation to provide for such action, the message Gertrud Bäumer received, quite without warning, on 27 February, 1933, was that she was being granted "leave of absence until further notice" by the new Minister, Wilhelm Frick. After enquiring the reason for this, she was told that her policies in respect of both youth and women's affairs "are contrary to the attitude of the Minister and make collaboration impossible". Gertrud Bäumer wryly commented in a letter to a friend that Frick's knowledge of her policies was restricted to the distorted way they were described in his own Party's propaganda⁵. She was finally given notice of dismissal

1. Taylor Cole, "The Evolution of the German Labour Front", Political Science Quarterly, 1937, pp. 540-41.
2. Organisationsbuch der NSDAP, Munich, 1938, p. 154.
3. Wolfgang Schäfer, NSDAP. Entwicklung und Struktur der Staatspartei des Dritten Reiches, Hanover, 1956, p. 57.
4. Beckmann, op. cit., letter to Emmy Beckmann, 13 April, 1933, p. 50.
5. BA, Kl.Erw., no. 296-(1), letter from Gertrud Bäumer to Dorothee von Velsen, 7 March, 1933.

- along with a number of other officials - on 12 April, as a result of a law passed five days earlier¹; paragraph four of this provided for the removal from the public service of those whom the Nazis felt to be "politically unreliable"². To add insult to injury, Gertrud Bäumer's pension was made as small as possible, with her pre-war service as a school-teacher left out of the reckoning³. She did, however, derive some grim humour from the information that not one but two men had been brought in to replace her at the Ministry of the Interior, "since no-one has a grasp of all the business involved"⁴.

Gertrud Bäumer was convinced that the dismissal on political grounds of herself and of other women in responsible positions was a deliberate act of discrimination against "women as such". But the only other individual case she mentioned in her letter on this subject to her close friend, Emmy Beckmann, besides her own, was that of a Dr. Blochmann who was dismissed on grounds of "racial undesirability", since her mother was Jewish⁵. In the case of school-teachers, it is clear that members of both sexes were being affected in a similar way by the provisions of the law of 7 April, although proportionately the women tended to fare worse. In Prussia in 1933, twenty-two of the 261 men who were headmasters of girls' senior schools lost their jobs, while twenty-three of the sixty-eight headmistresses suffered the same fate. But, in most cases, these men and women were re-employed as senior teachers. Of the teachers themselves, 1% of the men and 4.5%

1. Beckmann, loc. cit.

2. "Gesetz zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums", RGB, 1933 I, 7 April, 1933, pp. 175-77.

3. Beckmann, op. cit., letter to Emmy Beckmann, 30 June, 1933, p. 53.

4. Ibid., letter to Emmy Beckmann, 13 April, 1933, p. 50.

5. Beckmann, op. cit., letter to Emmy Beckmann, 13 April, 1933, pp. 50-51.

of the women in established positions were dismissed; it was estimated that at least two-thirds of the women were non-"Aryan". And almost all of the seventy-nine probationary women teachers who were dismissed were found to be non-"Aryan", too. The other major group of women who gave up teaching at this time were described as being those who had come into the schools at the time of the reform of girls' senior schooling, in 1908, and who were now due to retire because of their age. It was, no doubt, very convenient indeed to have categories of women teachers who could be dismissed on unconventional, if now legal, grounds, since there was still the problem of a surplus of candidates for their jobs. During 1933 - no doubt largely as a result of the dismissals - the situation improved so far that of the 1,320 candidates available at the start of the year, only one-third were still without a position twelve months later¹.

There were protests against the dismissal of both men and women as a result of provisions in the law of 7 April, but often these led to the dismissal of the person making the protest. Such was the case with Professor Anna Siemsen of the University of Jena, who made a courageous attack on the authorities for the dismissal of a valued male colleague². No doubt her membership of the SPD - for which Party she was a Reichstag deputy from 1928 to 1930 - set the seal on her own dismissal, after which she emigrated to Switzerland³.

1. Ludwig Wülker, op. cit., pp. 83-85.

2. Kurt Grossmann, "Der Fall Anna Siemsen", FiS, March 1933, pp. 7-8.

3. Wilhelm Kosch, Biographisches Staatshandbuch, 1963, vol. 2, p. 1110.

There could be little surprise that the Berlin lawyer, Hilde Benjamin, was banned from the practice of law: in addition to having been a member of the defence team in the trial of the murderer of the Nazi hero, Horst Wessel, she was a card-carrying Communist; now she joined in the work of the Communist underground¹.

Other women immediately found disfavour with the Government because of their outspoken pacifism and internationalism during the 1920s, and lost their jobs, often under one of the clauses of the law of 7 April. Women like Alice Salomon - immediately unacceptable, as a Jewess - who had had a distinguished career in social and educational work², and Minna Specht, a teacher who had turned her attention to radical, experimental education after the war³, had acquired an international reputation, but now saw no alternative to emigration. Marie-Elisabeth Lüders, distinguished as a politician as well as in her professional activity in social work and education, stayed on in Germany, like Gertrud Bäumer, in relative obscurity, eventually forbidden to publish her writings, as well as being deprived of her job⁴. But these women suffered because of their politics - in the broadest sense of the word - rather than because of their sex; the large number of women who continued to hold professional posts, and to be newly appointed to them, in and after 1933 confirms that the reasons the Nazis gave for the dismissals were the true ones.

1. Erich Stockhorst, Fünftausend Köpfe, Baden, 1967, p. 51.

2. Kosch, op. cit., p. 1060.

3. Internationales Jahrbuch für Geschichtsunterricht, 1961/62, p. 3.

4. Kosch, op. cit., p. 792.

However, since a substantial number of the women who had been admitted to the professions and found a position in public life under the Weimar Republic had also - as is understandable in pioneers - been at least moderate feminists, and often belonged to a liberal or socialist political party, the proportion of women who lost their places in these areas for "political" reasons was high in relation to their representation as a whole. The resulting depletion of women's numbers was regretted not only by feminists and progressives: misgivings, and even protests, were voiced by women also from among the ranks of the Nazis' own supporters. Sophie Rogge-Börner, who was not actually a Party member, but who passionately sympathised with the völkisch elements in its ideology¹, wrote a heartfelt plea to Hitler in February 1933 for the inclusion of the best people in the leadership of the country, regardless of sex. She claimed, in the light of the previous couple of years' experience, that the State and various official bodies were working to deny women what she saw as their rightful place in the professions². Her outspokenness brought her into trouble with the Gestapo in 1934, and eventually, in May 1937, a ban was placed on the publication of her monthly magazine, Die Deutsche Kämpferin, on the grounds that she was publishing articles which were so critical of the regime that they were considered abroad to be examples of opposition to National Socialism within Germany³.

1. BDC, no. 280, report in Ahnenerbe, 18 August, 1938.

2. Sophie Rogge-Börner, "Deutsche Frauen an Adolf Hitler", Reichenau, op. cit., p. 8.

3. BDC, loc. cit.

Less impulsive than Sophie Rogge-Börner, the conservative Ring Nationaler Frauen was anxious to demonstrate its approval of the elimination of dissidents from prominent positions. But, in a letter written to Hitler in April 1933, the leadership of the Ring expressed concern that those women who were deservedly being dismissed for "political unreliability" were too often being replaced not by women of the right political persuasion but by men¹. Such protests were no surprise to Gertrud Bäumer, who firmly believed that the women in the Party, also, would have to take up the struggle for the rights of women, particularly in the teaching profession². She based her hopes in this respect largely on Gertrud Baumgart's book Frauenbewegung Gestern und Heute, which was a moderately feminist tract - coming out strongly in favour of equality of opportunity for women in the professions³ - written by a woman who had joined the NSDAP in 1932⁴. But Gertrud Bäumer underestimated the ruthlessness with which the Nazis would subdue any "women's rights" campaign in their own ranks.

As Gertrud Bäumer had feared, the law of 30 May, 1932, formed a convenient precedent for measures directed against professional women. The Nazi Government followed it on 30 June, 1933, with a law dealing with civil servants generally, but affecting women particularly. Section three of the law consisted of amendments to the 1932 act, all

1. BA, R43II/427, letter from the committee of the Ring Nationaler Frauen to Hitler, April 1933 (exact date not given).

2. Beckmann, loc. cit.

3. Baumgart, op. cit., pp. 17 and 31.

4. BDC, Gertrud Baumgart's Party Membership Card.

of which constituted a worsening of the situation for married women in the service of the State. In the first place, dismissal was to be unconditional for those women whose husbands were also in the service of the State, since it was assumed that this meant that "their financial maintenance seemed from the size of the income in their family to be guaranteed in the long term", as the condition for dismissal was termed in this act, as in the previous one. Another modification was that the period between notice of dismissal and the termination of employment was reduced from three months to one month; at the same time, the maximum possible severance pay for long service was lowered from sixteen times the salary paid to the woman in her last month of employment to twelve times that sum, although the amounts for shorter periods of service were not changed. The paragraph allowing for re-employment of women dismissed remained, surprisingly, intact, but since the 1932 law had specified that this would occur "if at all possible", it would be easy for a Government to ignore the provision de facto altogether. And now dismissal and - in theory, at least - reinstatement were to be at the discretion of the Government alone, whose decisions were made binding on the courts, instead of being in the hands of the committee of arbitration set up under the 1932 act¹.

One of the saving graces of the 1932 act had been that it applied only to women employed in the service of the State at the national level, in the Reich Ministries and public corporations. This immediately exempted school-teachers, who were under the

1. "Gesetz zur Änderung von Vorschriften auf dem Gebiet des allgemeinen Beamten-, des Besoldungs- und des Versorgungsrechts", RGB, 1933 I, 30 June, 1933, Section III, "Rechtstellung der weiblichen Beamten", p. 435.

the jurisdiction of the individual states in the absence of a Reich Ministry of Education, although it took in some lawyers, doctors, and university staff. Now, however, in June 1933, the Government widened the scope of their act very considerably to include any married woman employed in the public service at state and local level also. Exceptions to the rule of dismissal on the grounds of financial security were still to be permitted in individual cases, if the Minister of the Interior approved; but the tone of the law as a whole suggested that such exceptions would be rare. Finally, in this section, a small sub-paragraph was inserted which was of major importance: it provided for the possibility of "departure from the provisions of Article 128, paragraph 2, of the Constitution", and thus allowed, once again, for women in the public service to be remunerated at a different - in fact, a lower - rate from men in a similar position¹.

To add to the provisions concerning married women, and to this blatant discriminatory measure against women as such, there was another clause in the act unfavourable to women. It was decreed that women could not be appointed to public service positions - in the civil service or in the professions - on a permanent basis until they reached the age of thirty-five². Commenting on this point, the Frankfurter Zeitung - which had managed to retain some of its character

1. Ibid., pp. 434-35.

2. Ibid., Section II, "Die Begründung des Beamtenverhältnisses", p. 434. This part of the act also stipulated that only persons who were prepared "to support the national state at all times and without reservation" could be employed by the State, and barred non-"Aryans" and their spouses from the public service.

and independence¹ - observed that

"the labour market and family policy considerations which are involved in this temporary postponement of fitness of a woman for such a position in the public service are clear".

The paper also implied - it could safely do no more - that the new law, although clearly based on the law of 30 May, 1932, had extended its scope far beyond the intentions of its creators². Some authorities, at any rate, saw fit to implement the new law promptly: the zealous officials of Hamburg, for example, dismissed 103 permanent and sixty-eight probationary married women teachers only a month after the passage of the law³.

Most of the provisions in the law of 30 June applied specifically to married women, but the clauses affecting remuneration and appointment on a permanent basis caused considerable apprehension among female civil servants and teachers, especially, that there was to be a systematic campaign to drive women out of professional positions altogether. The new measures seemed to reinforce the propaganda put out by the Nazis, both before and during 1933, about the Party's view of the role of women. Frick now found himself in the position of having to allay the fears which his own Party had consciously generated by publishing a letter which he sent to each of the Reich Ministers, to the governments of the Länder, and to the Reichsstatthalter⁴. In it, he observed that a number of

1. F. B. Aikin-Sneath, "The Press in Modern Germany", German Life and Letters, London, 1937, p. 58.

2. "Das Beamtenrecht der Frau", FZ, 18 July, 1933.

3. Report in FZ, 4 August, 1933.

4. "Die Beschäftigung weiblicher Beamten und Lehrer: Eine grundsätzliche Stellungnahme des Reichsinnenministers", VB, 13 October, 1933.

authorities had proceeded with far more vigour than was necessary in the matter of dismissing women from posts or demoting them, in the belief that this was in accordance with National Socialist policy. Frick went on to say in the strongest terms that the law of the land did not provide for a general campaign against women in the public service, whether as civil servants or teachers; rather, the law of 7 April applied to men as well as women. As for the law of 30 June, he said, it seemed that he had to repeat that its section covering the dismissal of married women should be applied only to married women, and that these must have their financial maintenance guaranteed "in the long term"; he had received a number of complaints that this law was being applied more freely than was legally permitted, which he regretted. But Frick did mention that in his view if there were two candidates for office, one male and one female, the man should be given preference, although he also felt that women ought to be appointed to positions to which they were specially suited, namely those connected with youth welfare and some areas of education¹.

Although Frick demonstrated relative moderation here, it became apparent that much of the damage had already been done. Women had not been well represented in the higher grades of the professions before 1933, but now those who had been employed at this level were no longer to be found there; this was very largely, of course, the result of the law of 7 April. But the women who were dismissed from high-level positions were not, on the whole, replaced by other women. This was the case with those women who had been employed as higher officials in the appropriate ministries of the

1. BA, R43II/427, letter from Frick to the Reich Ministers, Land governments and Reichsstatthalter, 5 October, 1933.

Reich, Prussian and Saxon governments before 1933, as advisers in matters of female and child labour; their dismissal from positions which came within the scope of the welfare activities deemed suitable for women was not followed by the appointment of more women¹. However, of the four women who had been senior industrial welfare superintendents before 1933, three were retained in office, along with a number of their more junior colleagues².

In the schools, however, it was claimed that women were being driven out of their jobs - particularly in the senior schools - in favour of male teachers. Hamburg was regarded as a particular offender, since in addition to dismissing its married women teachers it was also forcing unmarried women into premature retirement at the age of fifty-two³. On a larger scale, Rust, the Prussian Minister of Education, announced in April 1934 that the present ratio of male to female teachers in girls' senior schools of 3:5.3 should be adjusted to 3:2 by filling vacancies with men. War-wounded male teachers were to be given priority, except in subjects like biology and gymnastics, which should continue to be taught only by women⁴. Two Nazi principles were obviously in conflict here: the Party emphatically rejected any kind of coeducation and insisted on the separate functions of the sexes, which would logically mean that girls should be taught exclusively by women; but it also asserted that

1. Else Lüders, "Weibliche Aufsicht in Fabriken", Die deutsche Kämpferin, August 1935, p. 183.

2. Ibid., p. 182.

3. "Mädchenbildungs- und Lehrerinnenfragen in der Pädagogischen Presse", Die Frau, June 1934, p. 571.

4. Report in FZ, 9 April, 1934.

men should be given preference in job opportunities, particularly in the professions. In this instance, the practical advantage attached to the second of these - that of providing employment for those male teachers who could not find a job in a boys' school - was regarded as the overriding consideration.

Effective protests on a corporate basis against moves to discriminate against women in the professions were hardly possible, since the Nazis almost at once took the astute step of "reforming" the professional organisations. In April 1933 Gertrud Bäumer wrote to Emmy Beckmann, President of the Allgemeiner Deutscher Lehrerinnenverein, with the advice that the organisation should join the Nazi Teachers' League, without protest and if necessary under different leadership, in order at least to continue in existence¹. But a month later she once more wrote to Emmy Beckmann, this time to ask her to write an article about the ADLV for Die Frau, as an epitaph². Official pressure on the membership of the ADLV had led to its leadership dissolving the organisation early in May 1933; its last act was to recommend its members to join the NS-Lehrerbund (Nazi Teachers' League), an organisation for men and women teachers alike³. The control of the Party over the teaching profession seemed undisputed when in January 1934 Hans Schemm, Bavarian Minister of Education and leader of the NSLB, announced that 90% of all German teachers were members of his organisation⁴. As far as the women

1. Beckmann, op. cit., letter to Emmy Beckmann, 13 April, 1933, p. 50.

2. Ibid., letter to Emmy Beckmann, 11 May, 1933, p. 52.

3. Gertrud Bäumer, "Das Haus ist zerfallen", Die Frau, June 1933, p. 513.

4. Die Frau, June 1934, op. cit., p. 570.

were concerned, they lost not only their organisation but also their magazine, which was first taken over by a Nazi teacher, Hedwig Förster, and then replaced by a new publication under the editorship of Auguste Reber-Gruber, an official of the NSLB¹.

A few groups did manage to survive, at least for a time, while the Gleichschaltung (co-ordination) of the professional organisations proceeded apace. But these were special cases; for example, the Union of Catholic Women Teachers (VkdL) was protected by the Concordat of 20 July, 1933, between the Nazi Government and the Vatican. Frick confirmed this both in a broadcast and in the press in October 1933, leaving the VkdL to draw the conclusion that its "continued existence is assured, and the orders for the dissolution of the 'old associations' do not apply to the VkdL"². But, even so, this group's days were numbered: it was finally dissolved in October 1937³, when relations between the Catholic Church and the Nazi regime were becoming increasingly strained. One of the feminists' valued organisations, the Deutscher Akademikerinnenbund, was allowed to continue in existence, too, largely because it had sacrificed its leader, Marie-Elisabeth Lüders⁴, and shown complete willingness to co-operate with the new order⁵. But, as always, the Nazis could not tolerate for long the survival of any group which was not of their own

1. Ibid., p. 571.

2. Report in DMAd, 15 February, 1934, p. 48.

3. Report in FZ, 20 October, 1937.

4. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., pp. 50 and 55.

5. BA, K1.Erw., 296-(1), letter from Gertrud Bäumer to Dorothee von Velsen, 15 November, 1934.

creation, and in December 1935 the Deutscher Akademikerinnenbund was dissolved to allow the Nazis' own Reichsbund deutscher Akademikerinnen a monopoly¹.

The old multiplicity of organisations within each profession was superseded by a monolithic body under strict Party control. In addition to the NS-Lehrerbund (NSLB) for teachers there was the NSD-Dozentenbund for university lecturers, Hans Frank's Bund Nationalsozialistischer Deutscher Juristen for lawyers², the Reichsbund der Deutschen Beamten (RDB) for administrators - replacing the nine hundred groups which had existed formerly³ - and the Reichsärztekammer (Reich Chamber of Doctors) for the medical profession⁴. The lines were now firmly drawn between the individual professions, organised on a national basis, with men and women belonging to the same associations. This contrasted noticeably with previous practice, and was hardly in line with the Nazis' basic policy of keeping the sexes in separate groups. But it was completely consistent with the Nazi view that political leadership was the concern of men alone - and there was no attempt to disguise the fact that these new professional groupings were political formations - and it was also in keeping with the Nazi idea of the "community", whether that of the nation as a whole or that of a section of it⁵. However, since women were in a

1. "Fünf Jahre Reichsfrauenführung", FK, February 1939, p. 4.

2. This changed its name to the more Germanic NS-Rechtswahrerbund (NSRB) in April 1936 (Meyers Lexikon, vol. 8, Leipzig, 1940, col. 150).

3. Hermann Neef, Das Beamtenorganisationswesen im nationalsozialistischen Staat, Berlin, 1935, pp. 4-5, 11-12.

4. "Reichsärzteordnung", RGB, 1935 I, 13 December, 1935, pp. 1433-44.

5. Auguste Reber-Gruber, "Die Stellung der Frau im NSLB", Reber-Gruber, op. cit., p. 4, explains and justifies the new order in the NSLB to women teachers.

minority in all professions, and in a small minority in the administration and the legal profession, their chances of influencing the running of these organisations - insofar as this was possible in the Nazi State - were minimal.

Recognition was quickly given, however, to the fact that there were areas within each of the professions which were of particular concern to women. Early in 1934, the organisation of the teaching profession, the one in which women were best represented, took steps to cater for the large areas in which women were principally involved by appointing women "advisers". Thus, Auguste Reber-Gruber became the representative of women teachers within the NSLB, while Hedwig Förster was appointed leader of the section for girls' schooling in the NSLB¹. Both were teachers, and both had joined the NSDAP before the Machtübernahme². Dr. Reber-Gruber's position developed into one of considerable scope, so that her responsibilities were divided into seven sub-sections each of which was led by a reliable woman Party member; for example, Elise Lenz was put in charge of the affairs of women teachers in the elementary schools, while Friederike Matthias was responsible for the interests of women teachers in the girls' senior schools³. In addition to these appointments at the national level of the NSLB, a start was made at giving women representation in the area NSLB groups by appointing women "advisers" in each Gau and even at the more local level of the

1. Die Frau, June 1934, op. cit., p. 571.

2. BDC, File on Auguste Reber-Gruber, and Hedwig Förster's Party membership card.

3. BA, Slg. Sch. 230, "Angeschlossene Berufsverbände", undated, ?1938.

Kreis; these women had the dual function of representing women teachers' interests in the NSLB as a whole, and of keeping Auguste Reber-Gruber in touch with the affairs of women teachers at the local level¹.

The Reichsbund der Deutschen Beamten, in similar fashion, established a Women's Section to deal with matters specifically concerning female civil servants and to forge close links between them and the Deutsches Frauenwerk. The leader of this new office, Dora Hein, was a civil servant and long-standing Party member. She took up her duties on 1 October, 1934², and at the same time was appointed to a position in the national office of the DFW, to ensure that the co-operation desired was achieved. In addition, it was recommended that, where necessary, "a suitable female Party member" should be appointed as an assistant responsible for women's affairs in the local branches of the RDB³. The legal profession, too, had its woman representative: Ilse Eben-Servaes, a solicitor who had joined the Party soon after the Machtübernahme, became the delegate in charge of legal matters of special interest to women lawyers within the Nazi lawyers' organisation. Her appointment to positions in the Party Leadership and the National Women's Leadership⁴ ensured that, once again, there would be close contact between the women in a profession and the mass of German women as represented by

1. Auguste Reber-Gruber, op. cit., pp. 10-11.

2. BDC, Party Census of 1939 and a personal statement by Dora Hein, 28 July, 1939.

3. "Eine Frauenabteilung beim Reichsbund der Deutschen Beamten", Die Frau, November 1934, p. 120.

4. BDC, answers to a questionnaire for the NSDAP Reichsleitung, 2 October, 1939.

the women's organisations.

The appointment of these women to positions in the professional organisations signified the acceptance by the Nazis of women in professional occupations. It was made clear that women in the professions were, however, to regard themselves as women first and then as civil servants or doctors or teachers. To emphasise this, separate groups of women in each profession were eventually created, which were affiliated to the DFW as corporate members as well as being an integral part of the national professional organisations. More than merely tolerating the presence of women in these occupations, the Nazi leadership even appointed married women - Auguste Reber-Gruber and Ilse Eben Servaes, for example - to their representative positions, in direct contrast to their loud objections to and measures against the professional Doppelverdiener. There was even for a time a National Association of Married Women Teachers affiliated to the DFW¹. Thus it appears that the Nazis' fundamental objection was indeed to "politically unreliable" women, while sound Party members were not denied advancement purely because they were women. This applied, of course, to the Party's organisations, but to neither the higher échelons of the Party itself nor the Government, since it was firmly insisted that women should play no part in "political" affairs². In keeping with the demand that the sexes should be treated as separate groups, women could hold key positions only in the women's section of a national

1. BA, loc. cit.

2. Hitler's description of his constant opposition to women in politics is to be found in Hitler's Table-Talk, London, 1953, no. 126, 26 January, 1942 (Evening), pp. 251-52.

organisation, or, in special cases - like Ilse Eben-Servaes - as isolated female representatives in such an organisation, which was firmly under male leadership.

Throughout 1934 teachers continued to be dismissed from their positions or demoted as a result of the operation of the law of 7 April, 1933. Both men and women suffered in this process of "purification" of the profession. At the same time, however, there were a few cases of women being promoted to responsible positions: Hedwig Förster was certainly "reliable" enough to deserve a post as headmistress of a senior school, and no doubt the others who were similarly favoured were equally considered suitable on political grounds. Here, at least, were some examples of dismissed women being replaced by other women¹. Also in 1934, Frick expressed grave concern at the reduction that had taken place in the number of qualified women welfare workers. Naturally, he said,

"this profession, too, must be purged of those elements whose character prevents their performing service to the national State. But it is not the intention of the National Socialist State to remove all female civil servants and employees from the service of the State on account of their sex, as a matter of principle.... Often the decrease in the number of women welfare workers is the result of a false application of the principles concerning the Doppelverdiener"².

Moves were made, also, to allay the fears which had arisen about the prospects for women doctors. It was reported in the Völkischer Beobachter early in 1934 that there were still persistent

1. Reports in DMHd., 15 February, 1934, p. 48; 15 May, 1934, p. 144; 15 August, 1934, p. 240. Promotions and dismissals or demotions were reported on the same page in each issue.

2. "'Weibliche Beamte in der Wohlfahrtspflege teilweise unentbehrlich'", Der Deutsche, 5 January, 1934.

rumours that women were to be barred from panel practice and probably also from studying medicine at university. To dispel these, the leader of the doctors' organisation, Dr. Wagner, had issued a statement to the effect that it was intended to admit to panel practice doctors of either sex in the lower income bracket; it was claimed that this meant that there was to be no special regulation concerning women, but since the income involved was to be that of the doctor together with that of his or her spouse, the result was bound to be that more men than women would be eligible. In addition, preference was to be given to those doctors who were married, in particular those with families, without reference to sex. Thus, concluded Dr. Wagner, "there can be no talk of any plan to throw women out of the medical profession"¹. By making this statement, he was in fact clarifying a situation which had been in doubt largely as a result of his own earlier threats to ban women from panel practice and to restrict their activity within the profession².

C. Consolidation and the Conflict between Doctrine and Necessity, 1934-40

The number of women doctors, and their share of places in the profession, increased steadily throughout the 1930s, from 2,455 (5%) at the beginning of 1930 to 2,814 (6%) at the beginning of 1934, and to 3,650 (7.6%) at the beginning of 1939³. By 1936, almost half of all employed women doctors were engaged in panel

1. "Keine Ausschaltung der Frauen von der Ärztlichen Tätigkeit", VB, 7 February, 1934.

2. Kelchner, op. cit., p. 42.

3. St.J.: 1932, p. 404; 1936, p. 510; 1939/40, p. 586.

practice. In addition, 42% of all women doctors were married, and of these 70% were mothers¹. At least in the medical profession, Nazi fears that women would selfishly sacrifice motherhood for a career were proved groundless. Women doctors assumed great importance in the network of organisations built up by the Party to try to involve women and girls directly in the life of the community. The women's Labour Service, the BdM, and educational and welfare services were among those areas in which expert medical advice was required², and the desire to keep the sexes separate in their organisational activities meant that this advice, and treatment, would have to be provided by women. The Nazi leadership accepted women in this field without feeling that their campaign against intellectual women was in any way compromised, since they argued that medicine was essentially a practical occupation³.

Teaching was another of the professions to which women were, in the Nazi view, more or less suited. The continuing surplus in the profession, however, led to attempts to arrest the steady flow of girls into courses to prepare them for it, even as late as 1936. In the following year, however, this policy was reversed, and increasing encouragement was given to girls to train as teachers⁴. Given this degree of policy change, and the removal of a number of women from teaching on political or racial grounds, it is perhaps surprising that the proportion of women in the profession remained

1. "Zahl und Familienstand der Ärztinnen", Die Frau, January 1936, pp. 238-39.

2. Report in Die Frau, April 1937, p. 402.

3. "Was Zahlen lehren", VB, 4 September, 1936.

4. See above, chapter 4, pp. 210-13.

fairly stable throughout the 1930s. It was understandable that their numbers increased, if only marginally, on the staffs of the elementary schools, since work with young children was particularly approved of for women by the Government. In the middle schools, concerned with children between ten and sixteen years of age, women's share among the teachers fell during the decade by about 5%. But in the senior schools their proportion declined by a mere 2% between 1931 and 1939 which was remarkable in view of the setting of the 3:2 ratio in favour of male teachers for the girls' senior schools in Prussia in 1934. As it was, women remained very much in the majority on the staffs of German girls' senior schools, with a share of 68% in 1939¹.

The Nazis were well aware that teachers were in a very influential position vis-à-vis young people, and were therefore determined to involve teachers in the work of the Party and its organisations, to ensure that their influence was exerted to propagate the National Socialist Weltanschauung. Auguste Reber-Gruber pointed out that the proportion of women teachers among holders of the Party's Gold Badge was high, and expressed the opinion that all women teachers ought to be members of the NS-Frauenschaft. Many women teachers were, she claimed, already heavily involved in the work of the women's organisations, in the Labour Service, and in the provision of evening classes². Equally, women teachers should accept and welcome the work of the Bund deutscher Mädel, which had great educational value in the

1. St.J.: 1932, pp. 424-25; 1937, pp. 574-76; 1939/40, 611-14.

2. Article by Auguste Reber-Gruber in Die Deutsche Höhere Schule, 1935, no. 14, pp. 483-84.

realm of character development. Dr. Reber-Gruber issued a warning in this connection, saying that "Whoever opposes the work of Adolf Hitler's young people...has absolutely no right to be a teacher in the Third Reich"¹.

Lip-service to Nazi demands of this kind was not sufficient. A Party official in Trier reported in 1935 that one woman teacher in the area

"has been a member of the NS-Frauenschaft since 1 July 1934. She does not buy our newspapers and has a very close association with the clergy. As it was reported to me in confidence, she is anything but a National Socialist. Her entire attitude to us at present can only be considered a facade in order to maintain her position"².

On the other hand, zealous Party workers were noticed and praised, and even sometimes rewarded. For example, an official of the Nazi Teachers' League, Friederike Matthias, was given a senior position in the Kiel educational administration in 1935 because she had dissolved a teachers' organisation in autumn 1933, and enrolled its members in the Nazi Teachers' League; in addition, she had won for the Reichsbund deutscher Akademikerinnen a respected position in the international association of professional women, without departing from National Socialist principles³.

The favourable position of women in the teaching and medical professions was not maintained in the academic life, although, as

1. Op. cit., pp. 480-82.

2. F. J. Heyen, Nationalsozialismus im Alltag, Boppard, 1967, "Beurteilung einer Lehrerin durch einen Ortsgruppenleiter in Trier vom 7. Januar 1935", no. 130, p. 256.

3. "Aus dem NSLB", Die deutsche höhere Schule, 1935, no. 10, p. 10.

Gertrud Bäumer - hardly an apologist for the Nazi regime - pointed out in 1939, a number of women were appointed to university staffs after 1933¹. Women had, in fact, never constituted more than about one per cent of university staff members, a level which they reached in winter 1930-31; after the purge of 1933, their numbers were reduced in winter 1934-35 to 28 (0.5%) from an unprecedentedly high figure of 74 in 1932-33. New appointments did, however, bring their numbers up to 46 (0.8%) by 1936. In the technical universities, where there were very few women lecturers, the same pattern emerged, so that in winter 1935-36 eight women lecturers constituted 0.5% of the total number. The teacher-training colleges experienced a different trend, with a continuous drop in the female share of their staffs from 20% in 1931 to below 4% in 1934-35, and to less than 2% in 1935-36². The heavy losses sustained by female academics after 1933 were largely attributed in the Nazi press - and by Gertrud Bäumer, too³ - to the purges sanctioned by the law of 7 April, 1933. The losses included the two women who in 1930 had been full professors in universities; one of these, Margarete von Wrangell, a botanist, had died in 1932, but Mathilde Vaerting had been dismissed from the University of Jena "on political grounds"⁴. But in spite of the Nazi view that some subjects were much less suitable for women to study and

1. Gertrud Bäumer, "Zur Berufsgeschichte der deutschen Akademikerin", Die Frau, June 1939, p. 453.

2. Figures from St.J.: 1932, p. 431; 1933, pp. 524-27; 1935, p. 525; 1936, pp. 548-49.

3. Gertrud Bäumer, loc. cit.

4. "Die deutsche Frau in Lehre und Forschung", FK, February 1938, pp. 2-3.

teach than others - the "rational" ones, particularly mathematics and the sciences being deemed the least suitable - women continued to be represented, albeit in very small numbers, in a wide variety of disciplines; in 1936 they were actually better represented in the medical and science faculties than in Arts¹.

The professional occupations to which women were most suited were, in the Nazi view, those which had a direct practical application. This was what justified the large numbers of women in the teaching profession, and also those in medicine. In 1935, a contributor to the official magazine of the NS-Frauenschaft, NS-Frauenwarte, asserted that architecture was indeed a practical subject, because the design of buildings was something which very greatly impinged on one's daily life. Thus, she continued, women's role in the home and her appreciation of the merits and limitations of a house from an altogether practical point of view made her particularly suited to be an architect². It was to be another three years before original Nazi policy, strictly interpreted, was to be departed from sufficiently to allow an official spokesman to suggest that engineering was another practical occupation which was eminently suitable for women³. The changes in the economic situation and the professional market in these crucial years, and the course of German foreign policy by the latter date of 1938, made such a suggestion acceptable in a way that it was

1. "Dozentinnen an den deutschen Hochschulen", Die Frau, November 1936, pp. 432-33.

2. Irmgard Depres, reported in the feature "Frau und Beruf", Die Frau, March 1935, p. 382.

3. "Warum nicht: 'Fräulein Ingenieur'?", Die Frau, November 1938, pp. 94-95.

not in 1935 or even 1936.

When they referred to the practical occupations to which women were most suited, the Nazis invariably - in 1939 as in 1930 or 1933 - meant social work of any kind. This was largely because it was absolutely compatible with their theories about the nature and abilities of women. But it was a view that was increasingly justified by the growing need among the organisations, particularly those involving women and children, for the advice and practical assistance which only a trained social worker could give¹. The operation of the women's section of the Labour Front, for example, required a considerable number of factory social workers and inspectors, as well as experts in its numerous advisory centres throughout the country². There were many other areas in which social workers were required, especially in the Party's welfare organisation, the NSV, in the women's Labour Service, as medical social workers, in youth welfare, and, above all, among families, whether those in urban areas or those who had settled on the land³. Once the Second World War had begun, however, priority was given to the recruitment of factory welfare workers, even, if necessary, from among those women who had entered other branches of welfare work, since there was a serious and growing shortage of social workers in industry which was particularly undesirable at a time when women were increasingly being encouraged to replace male industrial workers who had joined the armed

1. For an account of the Nazi view of the place of women in social work, see Hildegard Villnov, "Die Frau in der sozialen Arbeit", NS-Frauenbuch, Munich, 1934, pp. 70-73.

2. "Aus der Arbeit des Frauenamtes der Deutschen Arbeitsfront", Die Frau, May 1939, p. 442. See also Chapter 3, p. 149.

3. Hildegard Villnov, op. cit., pp. 71-72.

forces¹.

Another area of the broad social work category that was of particular importance once the war broke out was nursing. Before 1933, the bulk of sick nursing had been conducted by charitable organisations run by the Churches, with nuns playing a central role²; there had also been the women's section of the Red Cross, which had played an important part in the work of nursing during the First World War³, and for this reason was not favoured by those pacifist radicals who believed that the Red Cross was an instrument of war-mongers⁴. In 1934, the nursing corps of the Red Cross came under the leadership of Gertrud Scholtz-Klink, and was closely involved in the work of the NSV⁵. But the decline in the number of nursing nuns, as part of the general decline in recruitment to convents due to "the change in ideology", led to a serious shortage of nurses in the mid-1930s⁶. In addition, the Nazis aimed to create a corps of nurses which would be absolutely committed to National Socialism, and not under the control of a rival ideological interest group like the Roman Catholic Church, which had challenged official policy by forbidding its own nurses to take part in "certain operations", notably sterilisation⁷.

1. "Vermittlung von Volkspflegerinnen in soziale Betriebsarbeit", RAB, 1940 I, 16 February, 1940, p. 101.

2. "Der Nachwuchs an Krankenschwestern", FZ, 10 January, 1938.

3. "Die Frau im Roten Kreuz", FZ, 12 November, 1936.

4. "Die Welt wird schöner mit jedem Tag", FiS, May 1929, p. 4.

5. FZ, loc. cit.

6. FZ, 10 January, 1938, op. cit.

7. "Vereidigung von NS-Schwestern", FZ, 6 October, 1936.

To meet their need for more nurses in a "politically reliable" organisation, the Nazis founded their own group, the NS-Schwwesternschaft, commonly known as the "Brown Sisters", in 1936¹. Its leader was the organisational chief of the NSV, Erich Hilgenfeldt, and he appointed two women, Hildegard Rancke and Margarete Liesegang, as his chief assistants in the running of the corps, after consulting Dr. Wagner of the doctors' organisation². But they soon found that a secular organisation had a problem that the Catholic nursing orders could not have: Hilgenfeldt estimated at the beginning of 1938 that the "Brown Sisters" were losing members through marriage and consequent retirement at a rate of 35% per year³. Attempts were made to attract a wider group of girls into nursing by announcing, in July 1937, that a domestic science course could be counted as a part of the training for the profession⁴, and publicity was given in the press to the activities of the NS-Schwwesternschaft, which took on a martial tone with the personal oath of allegiance to Hitler administered to each recruit⁵. But the membership of the "Brown Sisters" in January 1938 looked very meagre at 6,000, especially beside an announcement that the estimated shortage of nurses necessitated the recruitment of 30,000 more women⁶.

1. Ibid.

2. HA, Reel 13, folder 254, report in "Partei-Archiv", November 1936.

3. FZ, 10 January, 1938, op. cit.

4. HA, Reel 13, folder 253, Reichsfrauenführung, "Rundschreiben FW Nr. 66/37", 12 July, 1937.

5. "'Wo wir stehen, steht die Treue!'", Fränkische Tageszeitung, 20 February, 1937.

6. FZ, loc. cit.

During the Second World War, the position was so serious that girl medical students had to be compulsorily drafted into nursing for spells of three months each¹.

The area of the professions in which women were least well represented before 1933 was law. Throughout the Weimar years, women were excluded from the judiciary in Roman Catholic Bavaria², and although elsewhere in Germany women were eligible for appointment as judges, no woman judge was given a place in the Supreme Court of Justice before the 1950s³. Even as late as 1930, there was still no female public prosecutor in the relatively liberal state of Prussia⁴. That Germany was not particularly backward in this context may be illustrated by an article, commenting on the British situation, carried by The Times on the first day of 1973, more than fifty years after all judicial offices were opened to women⁵:

"About 6 per cent of barristers are women; Mrs. Justice Lane is still the only woman among 70 High Court judges; there are no women at the Court of Appeal nor have any Law Ladies joined the Law Lords...."⁶.

Nevertheless, the figures in the 1933 census in Germany seemed to show that women's representation in the legal profession was very meagre indeed: out of 10,441 judges and public prosecutors thirty-six were

1. Ilse McKee, To-Morrow the World, London, 1960, p. 99.

2. Report in BF, July/August, 1932, p. 2.

3. Johannes Feest, "Die Bundesrichter", W. Zapf (ed.), Beiträge zur Analyse der deutschen Oberschicht, Tübingen, 1964, p. 152.

4. "10 Jahre weibliche Richter", Die Frau, January 1933, p. 249.

5. Douie, op. cit., p. 64.

6. Ruth Miller, "Women in law: a question of changing society's views of women's role and the profession's needs", The Times, 1 January, 1973.

women, and only 282 of the 18,766 solicitors were women¹. The presence of over 1,000 girl law students in the universities at the same time², however, suggested that there would soon be a marked increase in the number of women practising law, if no obstacle were put in their way.

After the Nazi take-over there were, however, to be changes which affected the legal profession as a whole, and ones which particularly affected women lawyers. For a start, Hitler's deep antagonism towards the judiciary, coupled with his desire to make it politically docile, led to its being purged and also to a restriction of its sphere of competence³. The desirability of having women as judges, counsel or lawyers was the subject of discussions at Government level for some time. In August 1936, after a meeting in the Ministry of Justice at which the question had still not been resolved, Hess took it upon himself to ask Hitler's opinion, since "the Party also has a special interest in this matter". This settled the question, since Hitler firmly pronounced that women should be neither judges nor counsel, and that women law graduates would in future be able to find State employment only in administrative positions. The possibility of women continuing to become lawyers in private practice was not ruled out by this judgment⁴.

Hitler's decision was accepted as definitive by the Government, although it raised many problems for his Ministers. At least those

1. "Berufszählung von 1933", St.J., 1938, p. 32.

2. St.J., 1932, pp. 426-27.

3. Hubert Schorn, Der Richter im Dritten Reich, Frankfurt, 1959, pp. 11-14, 83-84.

4. BA, R43II/427, letter from Bormann to Gürtner, 24 August, 1936.

women who were already employed as fully-established lawyers and judges were not to be affected by the ruling, but there remained in addition a considerable number of junior barristers and trainee solicitors who were now obliged to alter their career aspirations and for whom suitable alternative employment would have to be found. Bormann expressed the hope that they would all be found places in administration, and left the arranging of this to the Ministry of Justice¹. Freisler, acting for Gürtner in this matter, expressed very great concern about the prospects for these women, many of whom, he pointed out, had spent large sums of money on their training, had pursued their studies with dedication and diligence, and who often had dependent relatives to support. Freisler wrote to the various Reich and Prussian Ministers to the effect that the Ministry of Justice had managed to find places for a number of the women concerned, as had Frau Scholtz-Klink's office, but there remained a number for whom, he hoped, his colleagues in the other Ministries would be able to find employment commensurate with their qualifications and ability, preferably on a permanent basis². While Freisler's concern in this case does him credit, it is remarkable that it was possible for Hitler to cause so much difficulty for his Government by an arbitrary statement of opinion which his Ministers did not consider opposing. This was, of course, at least partly an ideological question, with Party doctrine opposed to the appearance of women lawyers in courts concerned with criminal cases; the functions of a sentencing judge who represented the authority

1. BA, R43II/427, letter from Bormann to Gürtner, 24 August, 1936.

2. Ibid., letter from Freisler to the Reich and Prussian Ministers, with the exception of the Chancellery and Hess, 16 January, 1937.

of the State were clearly ones to be exercised by men alone¹, in the same way that representation in political life was reserved for men.

The role of the women's organisations in this case went beyond finding places for some of the women lawyers on their staffs; it was, in addition, Frau Scholtz-Klink's duty to explain and to justify to the women of the nation this measure which seemed to discriminate against those of their sex who had chosen a legal career. Frau Scholtz-Klink delegated this task to, appropriately, her own legal adviser in the National Women's Leadership, Dr. Ilse Eben-Servaes, who had a lucrative legal practice of her own². Ironically, it was in 1936, the year of Hitler's order, that both she and Frau Scholtz-Klink were accorded the honour of being admitted to membership of the Academy of German Law³. Dr. Eben-Servaes quickly produced an article for the January 1937 edition of the news-letter of the National Women's Leadership, in which she explained in detail the opportunities which remained open for women with legal training; these were to be found in the women's organisations, the welfare service, in marriage and family law, in the Party's courses in political education, and in all cases in which women or children might need legal guidance. Dr. Eben-Servaes emphasised that the female lawyer's ability was not in doubt, but that she would nevertheless be of greatest service to the community in those areas especially

1. Elfriede Eggener, "Die Aufgabe der Rechtswahrerin", FK, July 1939, p. 5.
2. BDC, answers to a questionnaire for the NSDAP Reichsleitung. Letters of 7 and 22 January, 1942, reveal that she continued her private legal practice in the face of rules banning outside employment for members of the Party Leadership.
3. HA, Reel 13, folder 254, "Partei-Archiv", November 1936. BA, R61/168, letter from Ilse Eben-Servaes to Herr Loyal at the Akademie für Deutsches Recht, 12 December, 1938.

concerned with women's affairs, leaving fields of less immediate relevance to women to her male colleagues¹.

Dr. Eben-Servaes was particularly anxious that Hitler's ruling should not discourage girls from studying law; neither, she stressed, should the unfortunate fact that a number of the older women lawyers now faced some hardship, given that there was in fact a surplus of male lawyers in the older age-group, act as a disincentive. By way of positive encouragement, she pointed out, in August 1937: "it is estimated that in two or three years' time there will be a severe shortage of male lawyers, which will presumably work to the advantage of the woman lawyer". It had already, she continued, been possible to absorb more or less all of the junior women lawyers into the economic system or into the administration of the Frauenwerk, and this latter area of the women's organisations would, she predicted, have a positive need for even more law graduates, as it expanded². Her views were borne out when, after just two years, Dr. Donke of the Party's section for academic affairs announced that "the sharp decline in the number of young women lawyers is particularly undesirable...", since the tasks for which women were especially suited, in the welfare services and in women's and youth organisations, had proliferated rapidly. Dr. Donke went as far as to express the opinion that if, as was being planned, a special kind of court was to be established to deal with legal problems arising from family life, it might even be desirable to bring women back into court work, since

1. Ilse Eben-Servaes, "Die Frau als Rechtswahrerin", Nachrichtendienst der Reichsfrauenführerin, January 1937, pp. 6-7. This article was also published in FK, January 1937, p. 13.

2. HA, Reel 13, folder 253, "Rundschreiben Nr. FW 76/37", from Ilse Eben-Servaes to her representatives in the Gaue, 12 August, 1937.

they had a particularly valuable contribution to make in this area¹.

The restriction placed on women lawyers in 1936 was actually an exception to the trend of policy towards women in the professions in that year, which paralleled the change in official utterances about and attitudes to girl students. The reason behind this was perfectly clear: by 1936 it had become apparent that, with a few exceptions, such as dentistry², the surpluses there had been in all professions in the early 1930s had been eliminated, and that there would very soon even be a serious shortage of candidates for some, if not all, of them. The demands of the Four Year Plan - conceived in August 1936 - for skilled and qualified personnel from all professions quickly made themselves apparent, and, in the ensuing anxiety on the part of the Government to provide staff - on a scale which they had shortsightedly failed to predict when drawing up the new industrial policy - the appeal for more recruits for the professions was directed specifically at women as well as men. "To-day", asserted a writer in the Völkischer Beobachter, "we can no longer do without the woman doctor, lawyer, economist and teacher in our professional life"³.

To reinforce the new attitude towards professional women, the National Women's Leadership began to increase its contacts with them and interest in their activities. In June 1936, an agreement was reached between Frau Scholtz-Klink's office and the NSLB for close collaboration on matters of mutual interest, while a section to deal

1. IfZ, MA 205, NSDAP/HA-Wissenschaft, Dr. W. Donke, "Der Rechtswahrer", cutting from Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung, 11 August, 1939.

2. "Aufhebung der Sperre des Neuzugangs zum zahnärztlichen Studium und zum Dentistenberuf", DWEuV 1937, no. 200, 22 March, 1937, p. 187.

3. "Die Akademikerin von heute", VB, 4 September, 1936.

with "academic questions" was established in the Reichsfrauenführung on 1 July, 1936. From about this time, Frau Scholtz-Klink made a practice of addressing meetings of girl students and women lecturers¹, groups to whom she had formerly paid little or no attention. Some kind of justification for this initial neglect of academically-talented women by the Nazi women's organisation, and the vivid contrast with it of the concern which began to be shown for them from 1936, was felt to be necessary; but the version put out in the DFW's magazine rather lacked conviction. It admitted that it was difficult to explain why professional women and particularly women lecturers in universities and colleges, had not been welcomed into the work of the women's organisations from the very start; the reason was, however - so the official account ran - that "the new tasks for these women could be undertaken for the first time only after they had developed organically from the practical work"². The significance of this was that intellectual women as a group had had no opportunity to influence and shape the development of the women's work of the nation in the first years after 1933, and so the pattern had been designed by women who were regarded as being more genuinely representative of the mass of women in the nation, and who, more important, were unquestioningly loyal to the NSDAP.

But even as the demands upon human resources being made by the Four Year Plan became apparent, influential members of both Party and Government continued to be exercised by the question of the

1. "Fünf Jahre Reichsfrauenführung", FK, February 1939, pp. 4-5.
2. "Der Aufruf der Reichsfrauenführerin an die Dozentinnen", FK, February 1938, p. 3.

place of women in professional life. Those who thought that Frick's assertion that there was not to be a general campaign against women in the professions, made in 1933, had settled the matter may have begun to have doubts after Hitler's restriction on entry to the practice of law by women in 1936. The new and comprehensive law relating to the civil service which was published in January 1937 had little to say about women; it merely reiterated the 1933 provisions for the possibility of dismissing a married woman official either at her own request or if her financial position would be secure without her own salary¹. Five months later, an amendment was introduced to exempt the large number of employees of the Minister of Posts and Telegraphs from it as a group, and to allow for the re-employment of women whose financial position had changed for the worse to a significant extent after leaving work². This tinkering with the law, along with the absence of any clear guidelines for the employment of women in official positions generally, can only have increased the uncertainty that already existed.

As had been the case with the debate about the place of women in the legal profession, so here again it was Hess's office which brought the matter to Hitler's personal attention. Sommer wrote to Lammers in May 1937 asking for a reply to a question he had asked some time before, without receiving an answer, namely, did Hitler think that women ought still to be appointed to senior positions in the civil service?³. Clearly, the Party's central office

1. "Deutsches Beamtengesetz", RGB, 1937 I, 26 January, 1937, p. 51.

2. "Verordnung zur Durchführung des Deutschen Beamtengesetzes", RGB 1937 I, 29 June, 1937, p. 676.

3. BA, R43II/427, letter from Sommer to Lammers, 4 May, 1937.

in Munich, under the leadership of Hess, with Bormann as his deputy, was determined to try to hold the National Socialist Government to original Party doctrine now that it was in power, irrespective of the needs of the economy or of the staffing requirements of the professions; the holding of high office in the State was, according to Nazi ideology, a singularly masculine function. In this case as in the one affecting the legal profession, Hitler responded, in his role as leader of the Party, that, as a matter of principle, he wished to see only men appointed to posts in the higher civil service, although he added that exceptions might be made for individual women in positions connected with the administration of the welfare services¹.

Once again it fell to the Ministry of the Interior to moderate the Party's policy in favour of women, as it had done in 1933. This time, Pfundtner, writing on behalf of Frick, proposed that the fields of education and health, as well as social welfare, be designated areas in which women could be appointed to high-ranking official positions², and Lammers incorporated them into his statement of the final decision, which he then communicated to Hess's office in July 1937³. A month later, Pfundtner informed the other Reich Ministries of the ruling in a confidential circular⁴. Such was the secrecy involved that a member of Frick's staff felt it necessary to

1. Ibid., letter from Lammers to Hess's office, 8 June, 1937.

2. Ibid., letter from Pfundtner, 18 June, 1937.

3. Ibid., letter from Lammers to Hess's office, 25 July, 1937.

4. Ibid., letter from Pfundtner to the Reich Ministries, 24 August, 1937.

ask Lammers if there was any objection to the content of the new order's being intimated to Frau Scholtz-Klink¹, who, as the chief representative of the women of the nation, should presumably have been considered an interested party. Lammers replied at the end of January 1938 that there was no objection to Frau Scholtz-Klink's being informed about the order², but the fact that she had not been automatically included in the original, confidential list throws light on how little real influence she had, even in matters of special concern to women, in spite of her title.

As it happened, representations on behalf of the Reichsfrauenführerin were not, in this case, necessary, since she revealed in a letter to Bormann that she had known for some time about the order issued by Frick which "forbids the employment of women in the higher civil service", as she rather wrongly put it. Hess apparently had explained fully the circumstances of the decision to her, at her own request, and so she was well aware that there were cases in which exceptions to the ruling would be allowed. The purpose of her letter to Bormann was to press for an exception to be made in the case of a talented woman astronomer, Dr. Margarete Güssow, who had been proposed by her male superior for promotion to a permanent, senior position in the Berlin Observatory. Frau Scholtz-Klink approached Bormann on this occasion after the nomination of Dr. Güssow had been rejected by Rust, as Minister of Education, because she was a woman and therefore not eligible for promotion to a post of this kind, according to the

1. Ibid., letter from Dr. Schütze to Lammers, 17 December, 1937.

2. Ibid., letter from Lammers to the Minister of the Interior, 31 January, 1938.

order of 24 August, 1937¹.

For the most part, Frau Scholtz-Klink was thoroughly docile, accepting Party edicts and faithfully explaining and justifying them to the women whose leader she was; this had been true even when Hitler's decision against admitting women to legal practice in the courts had been announced. Now, however, in the case of Margarete Güssow, she made a rare and rebellious outburst against a situation where "a woman cannot obtain a position because she is a woman, although she is, by reason of her ability and achievements, suited to it". Frau Scholtz-Klink asserted that the man who had been suggested by Rust as an alternative candidate for the post had been rejected by Dr. Guthnick, the head of the Observatory, because "his accomplishments bore no relation to Dr. Güssow's"; in addition, five astronomers besides Dr. Guthnick supported Dr. Güssow's candidature. The Reichsfrauenführerin openly poured scorn on the way that a gifted woman with an international reputation was being denied the opportunity to realise her full potential, but at the same time voiced deep anxiety about what she saw as an alarming precedent. She referred also to the "growing tendency to deny gifted and able women the chance of advancement", which had convinced her that it was now necessary "to put this matter, too, to the Führer, from the women's point of view, so that there can be a fundamental clarification of it". In particular, the question of the position of women on university staffs was one which she would have liked to broach to Hitler; but the problem was that the Reichsfrauenführerin was never given the chance to discuss matters with Hitler - which is amazing, if her title was supposed to

1. Ibid., letter from Frau Scholtz-Klink to Bormann, 24 January, 1938.

mean anything - and so she had to depend on Bormann to represent her views to him¹.

Given Bormann's adherence to Party ideology, as Hess's second-in-command at the Brown House, it was unlikely that Frau Scholtz-Klink would find in him her champion to represent the women's cause to Hitler. As it turned out, Bormann was laid low by influenza in January 1938, and so he passed Frau Scholtz-Klink's letter on to Lammers, with the request that he edit it, submit it to Hitler, and find out his decision. There was, apparently, no need to express a point of view; Hitler's opinion was what counted². It was three weeks before Bormann received his answer, and then it came in the bald statement that there was no objection to Dr. Güssow's appointment, with no explanation of the decision given, and no mention made of the more general points Frau Scholtz-Klink had raised³; these had, presumably, been eliminated in the process of editing the letter.

Although she succeeded in her campaign on this occasion, Frau Scholtz-Klink had had to take a firm stand, and the broader issues were no nearer to being clarified. If there was such difficulty in achieving promotion for Margarete Güssow, there can have been little chance for those who were less assiduous in showing an acceptable degree of enthusiasm for the regime and its affiliates. Margarete Güssow was a member of the Party, having joined it on 1 April, 1933, and the NS-Frauenschaft in November 1935. She was also a member of the National Physical Education Association, the NS-Volkswohlfahrt,

1. Ibid., letter from Frau Scholtz-Klink to Bormann, 24 January, 1938.

2. Ibid., letter from Bormann to Lammers, 29 January, 1938.

3. Ibid., letter from Lammers to Bormann, 21 February, 1938.

and other, smaller groups¹. Thus, she was classed as "politically reliable". In spite of the difficulties surrounding her new appointment, she was given pride of place in the DFW's magazine in February 1939, as an example of what women who were both talented and reliable could achieve. In the article, all that was said about the actual appointment was that Hitler personally had been responsible for it²; it was very clear that German women were not supposed to know how limited their opportunities had become in some areas of the professions, at the whim of Hitler and his small inner circle of senior Ministers and Party bosses.

But the article on Margarete Güssow, which included an interview with her, seems to have been less a device on Frau Scholtz-Klink's part for deluding German women than a part of a campaign which she had begun to wage unilaterally, as leader of the nation's women. The Government had announced a pressing need for professional people in 1936, and Frau Scholtz-Klink took this at face value and accepted that - as had been said - it applied to women as well as men. In any case, she had a growing need for talented and highly educated women in her own organisations. Well aware of the dangers of giving these women power and influence, she aimed to utilise their abilities, but at the same time to tie them into the women's organisations in such a way that it was clear that they were a valuable part of them, but only one among others equally valuable. She had begun this process of "underpinning our practical work with a theoretical basis", as she and her advisers liked to say³, in 1936

1. BDC, File on Margarete Güssow.

2. Report in FK, February 1939, p. 2.

3. "Der Aufruf der Reichsfrauenführerin an die Dozentinnen", FK, February 1938, p. 4.

Ilse Eben-Servaes, "Wissen ist uns Verpflichtung", FK, op. cit., p. 13.

by making contact with groups of professional women and, especially, women in the universities. The next step was to create a section within the DFW - alongside the sections for political education, German culture and training in domestic science and child-care - for what she called "academic work", in the summer of 1937¹. In June of that year, a circular went out to the Gau NS-Frauenschaft leaders announcing that Ilse Eben-Servaes had been chosen to lead this new section, and asking that "a suitable woman graduate" be selected to head a section for "academic work" in each Gau office².

Dr. Eben Servaes described the main task of her new section as "the construction of a bridge between learning and practical work", by which the women involved in both these kinds of activity could benefit from exchanging ideas and experiences. There would be, for example, study groups in which women on the staff of the DFW's section "domestic economy-national economy" would meet the small number of women who were lecturers in economics; in other groups, doctors and members of the child-care courses put on by the DFW could discuss matters of mutual interest. Women on the staff of Arts faculties were assigned the area of "culture and education" for making contact with women outside the academic world. These activities were to take place not only at the national level but also in the Gaue, organised by the appointed representative; it was hoped also to begin study groups in the smaller unit of the Kreis³.

1. Loc. cit.

2. HA, Reel 13, folder 253, DFW Reichsstelle, "Rundschreiben Nr. FW 51/37", 18 June, 1937.

3. Ilse Eben-Servaes, loc. cit.

To bring the women of the DFW into closer touch with women in all sections of the professions, the organisation's magazine began to feature articles about women's place in them. The more contentious areas, particularly, were given wide coverage in such articles as "Woman as lawyer", "The tasks of women in the law", "The woman doctor", "The tasks of women in economic science", all of which emphasised that the work of the professions was now being conducted in a new spirit which considered the good of the nation above all, with the interests of individuals of secondary importance. In addition, women were assigned special areas of interest within each profession: child-care and all matters of racial health and population growth were women's chief concern in medicine; in law, it was matters connected with the family and youth; and, with housewives the largest consumers in the home market, women economists ought, it was said, to have a special interest in price movements and patterns of consumption¹.

The climax of all this activity was a conference held at the beginning of 1938, to which Frau Scholtz-Klink invited twenty-five women lecturers at universities and teacher-training colleges. The programme for the first day consisted of a tour of a new training centre for domestic science and child-care, a talk by Dr. Eben-Servaes

1. Ilse Eben-Servaes, "Die Frau als Rechtswahrerin", FK, January 1937, p. 13.

Wiltraut von Brünneck, "Die Aufgaben der Frau im Recht", FK, November 1937, pp. 9-10.

Ursula Romann, "Die Ärztin", FK, op. cit., pp. 8-9.

Marilese Cremer, "Mitarbeit der Frau in der Wirtschaftswissenschaft", FK, op. cit., p. 11.

about the purpose of the section for "academic work" in the DFW, followed by a discussion whose subject was "Women in research at the universities". Frau Scholtz-Klink herself spoke briefly to the assembled company, and then left matters in the capable hands of Dr. Eben-Servaes¹. Two lecturers from the technical university in Aachen wrote subsequently of the pleasure and value they had derived from this meeting, secure now in the knowledge that "we are needed!", after the uncertainties which had surrounded the position of women in academic life. In addition, the isolation they had felt, working away in their own university, had now largely been dispelled by meeting colleagues from other institutions, many of them for the first time². Frau Scholtz-Klink, then, had shown that, in her view, there was a special place in the life of the nation for women on the staff of a university, although she still hoped to have some clarification of the Party's view of the position of these women, preferably by Hitler himself³.

In fact, women were still being appointed to positions on university staffs, which indicates that no attempt was being made to phase them out altogether. In the autumn of 1938, Dr. Maria Lipp was promoted to the Chair of Chemistry in the technical university at Aachen. This was the first time a woman professor had been appointed in a technical university. Professor Lipp had begun her lecturing career in the 1920s, managing to survive the purges of the post-1933

1. "Die deutsche Frau in Lehre und Forschung", FK, February 1938, pp. 4-5.
2. Gertrud Savelsberg and Doris Korn, "Rückblick auf die Tagung der Deutschen Dozentinnen in Berlin 3.-6.1.1938", FK, February 1938, p. 12.
3. BA, op. cit., letter from Gertrud Scholtz-Klink to Bormann, 24 January, 1938.

period, although she was not a Party member¹. Earlier in 1938, Gertrud Ferchland, a Party member since May 1933, had been appointed as a professor at the Schneidemühl teacher-training college², and at the beginning of 1939 Dr. Maria Küsters became a senior lecturer in dentistry in the medical faculty of Munich University³. She was certainly not appointed as a Party member; but she did join the NSDAP within a year of her appointment⁴. One Party stalwart to be promoted was Charlotte Lorenz, who moved to a senior lecturing position in political science and economics at the University of Berlin from the post of adviser in the National Statistical Records Office⁵ in October 1940. She had joined the Party in May 1933, and was also a member of the NSLB, the Dozentenbund, the RDB, the NSV, and a number of other groups in addition⁶. In the light of such developments, the Frankfurter Zeitung observed:

"In the initial uncertainty about the working of National Socialist principles in practice, the widespread conviction prevailed that in the new State women would sooner or later be phased out of the professions, and particularly out of the academic life. So far, this expectation has not been realised. On the contrary...."⁷.

1. "Zur Lage der deutschen Frau", Die Frau, November 1938, p. 98.
BDC, Maria Lipp's NSLB card, dated 1.10.38.
2. Ibid., Gertrud Ferchland's NSLB card, dated 1.1.37.
"Personalnachrichten", DWEuV 1938, 5 February, 1938, p. 57.
3. "Zur Lage der deutschen Frau", Die Frau, February 1939, p. 271.
4. BDC, Maria Küsters' Party Membership and NSLB cards.
5. Stockhorst, op. cit., p. 276.
6. BDC, Partei-Kanzlei Korrespondenz, and Charlotte Lorenz's Party Membership and NSLB cards.
7. "Dozentinnen", FZ, 4 February, 1938.

The change in official attitudes to women in the professions which had become apparent in 1936 became even more marked by 1938, in spite of the two decisions made by Hitler to the disadvantage of women in the interim. The growing shortage of male candidates for the professions, eventually foreseen in 1936, was beginning to make itself felt, even before the outbreak of the Second World War. In teaching, it was reported in November 1937 that women's prospects had improved considerably: whereas only nineteen women had been given permanent jobs in Prussian girls' senior schools in the years 1932-35, twenty-five had been appointed in 1936 alone, with thirteen probationary women teachers also found places in that year¹. A year later, the position of male teachers had improved to such an extent that, for the first time for over a decade, every applicant was found a place. This at once raised the prospect of a shortage, which, it was estimated, would become acute from about 1942, when those teachers born in the 1880s - a decade with an extremely high birth-rate - began to retire. It was estimated that there would be enough women teachers, given the number of applicants in 1938, to supply the needs of the senior schools for some time to come, even allowing for the decline in men's numbers². Far from altering the ratio of male to female teachers in girls' senior schools radically in favour of men - as had been intended - the Government was now obliged to turn increasingly to women to fill these positions; the

1. Luise Raulf, "Frau und Naturwissenschaft", FK, November 1937, p. 13.

2. "Studienräte und Studienrätinnen an höheren Schulen", Die Frau, November 1938, p. 94.

census returns show that even in 1939, long before the shortage of male teachers was expected to be at its worst, women constituted 35% of all persons involved in education of one kind or another, which was an increase of 1% over the 1933 figure¹.

Teaching, of course, had always been more or less approved by the Nazis as a sphere of activity for women. But now, in 1938, the Government awoke to the fact that it would have to make good the shortages of male candidates throughout the professional spectrum from the significant reserve of candidates among the women of the nation, even in areas which were, from the Party's point of view, unsuitable for women. In February 1938, the Frankfurter Zeitung reported that women doctors, economists, scientists and "even women lawyers" were now regarded favourably in high places². Dr. Margarete Esch, a careers officer at Berlin University, observed that there were widespread opportunities for women doctors; significantly, she mentioned possibilities for them as medical officers of health and as advisers in administrative positions as well as the fields normally assigned to them by the Nazis, in the care of women and children. Prospects were still limited in dentistry, since there was a continuing surplus of candidates, but there were now opportunities for women in veterinary medicine, and in medical research of all kinds. In the technical and scientific professions, "which had", said Dr. Esch, "been considered a male preserve for a long time", women were increasingly being employed because of a shortage of men; in fact, women chemists, physicists, engineers and biologists

1. Calculated from figures in St.J., 1941/42, p. 38.

2. FZ, loc. cit.

were finding positions in industry or in research without any difficulty. In spite of the limitations on women's participation in the legal profession, there was a constant need for women lawyers in the organisations, in the employment exchanges and in administrative positions; the same was true for women economists¹. The 1939 census showed that 15.5% of all persons employed in administration at the national and local level, including the administration of justice, were women, which was an increase of 4% on the 1933 figure². This was hardly to have been expected if the restrictions placed on women in the civil service and the legal profession had been rigorously applied.

The outbreak of war in September 1939, and the withdrawal of men from the professions into the armed forces, made the country's dependence on women very much greater. In recognition of this, a national agency for advising women graduates about vacancies in positions in the administration, the economy and the social services was opened in Berlin on 1 October, 1939³. But even in October 1939 reports came in from all over Germany of shortages in all areas of the professions. There were not enough doctors generally⁴, and in Trier, for example, the situation was extremely serious, with only thirty-four doctors practising where there had previously been seventy-four⁵. In teaching, the overall situation was so bad that

1. Margarete Esch, "Die Aussichten des Frauenstudiums", FZ, 19 March, 1939.

2. St.J., loc. cit.

3. Report in Die Frau, December 1939, p. 85.

4. IfZ, MA 441/1, frame 2-750069, BziL, "Kulturelle Gebiete", 13 October, 1939.

5. Ibid., frame 2-750043, BziL, 9 October, 1939.

retired teachers and married women who had resigned were being asked to return to work¹, but even so the situation remained extremely serious². In the following month, it was reported that schoolboys and schoolgirls in the senior classes were being encouraged to enrol for the new crash courses for elementary school-teaching³. There was also a serious and growing shortage of lawyers, particularly of barristers and judges, so that the Ministry of Justice devised a less lengthy training course for junior members of the profession; even so, it was estimated that the number of counsel in Berlin courts would drop by anything up to 40% in the near future⁴. A month later, in November 1939, it was decided to shorten the period of training for intending lawyers as well, whether they were being called up for active service or not, in view of the general shortage of personnel in both the legal profession and the administration⁵. Even the Party eventually had to make sacrifices: in August 1940, the order went out that teachers should be asked to attend Party meetings in school hours only if their absence would prejudice the Party's interests, and that

1. Ibid., frame 2-750042.

2. Ibid., frame 2-750087, BziL, 16 October, 1939. Anxiety on this matter featured in a number of reports in the following month, on 10, 17 and 24 November, 1939.

3. Ibid., frame 2-750197, BziL, 6 November, 1939.

4. Ibid., frame 2-750072, BziL, 13 October, 1939.

5. Ibid., frames 2-750073/4, BziL, 10 November, 1939.

Party events in which large numbers of teachers would be involved should be held in the school holidays¹.

The seriousness of this situation did not deter the NS-Rechtswahrerbund from complaining to Frick at the end of 1939 about the appointment of women lawyers, who had originally hoped to work in the courts, to permanent positions in the senior ranks of the civil service; although this had been precisely what Freisler had been trying to achieve, after Hitler's order of August 1936 restricting the scope of women lawyers, the NSRB expressed the opinion that only men should be appointed to such positions. Frick discussed the matter with Hess, and then produced a draft circular in which he explained that Hitler's decision that only men should be appointed to senior civil service positions had allowed for exceptions to be made in cases where the post was one to which a woman would be particularly suited. He went on to say that

"In a rational administration, where there are several possibilities, the most suitable must be chosen. This rule must also hold good for appointments to administrative positions."

From this point he argued that if it was felt that a woman would be a better choice for a particular position, even a permanent post in the higher civil service, then she ought certainly to be appointed. Her suitability, he added, might seem the greater in view of the growing shortage of administrators². Once again, Frick appears to

1. BA, NSD 3/5, Verfügungen, Anordnungen, Bekanntgaben, vol. 1, "Teilnahme von Lehrern und Lehrerinnen an Veranstaltungen und Schulungstagungen der Partei - B. 60/40 vom 14.8.40", p. 129.

2. BA, R43II/427, draft circular signed by Frick, January 1940 (exact date not given).

have been concerned that doctrinaire Party policy should not be applied in a fully comprehensive manner without any thought to practical consequences; as head of a large Government department, he, after all, had to ensure that the administrative machinery of the nation worked effectively, particularly in war-time. If there were not suitable men available to fill the gaps in the civil service caused by conscription, then, if it was to continue to function, women with the necessary training and qualifications would have to be brought in.

The draft circular went first to Hess, who passed it on to Lammers for his opinion. Lammers, who still employed women in responsible positions in the Chancellery¹, replied that the sense of the circular was not, as far as he could see, in conflict with the ruling Hitler had given in July 1937, about the appointment of women to senior posts in the civil service. He appears not to have consulted Hitler on this occasion², which probably prevented objections from being raised. Frick was, after all, allowing a much wider interpretation of the original order than Hitler's ruling would have permitted. With no obstacles raised, the circular went out in final form to all the Reich Ministers and senior officials of the Party in May 1940³. Already, in the same month, a law had been

1. Ibid., demonstrates that lists of officials to whom classified documents were to be shown include some women, e.g. on 19 July, 1935, 18 September, 1937, 17 March, 1938, 3 January, 1940. Three women (all unmarried) figure on the lists for all of these dates, with an additional three for the last one.
2. Ibid., letter from Lammers to Hess, 9 April, 1940.
3. Ibid., circular from Frick to the highest authorities of the Reich.

passed to the effect that women in the service of the State who married "need not be dismissed if their maintenance seemed guaranteed in the long term from the size of their family income". Women who had resigned or been dismissed for this reason could be reinstated, according to this new law¹. The wording of the act suggests that this was intended as a war-time measure, at least in the first instance, and not as a statement of a fundamental change of principle. It was still possible for a woman to request to leave the civil service on marriage, and to receive severance pay, as a statement by the Minister of Finance confirmed even in February 1941², at a time when it would have been more practical to discourage women from giving up work, given the chronic shortage of personnel.

As early as February 1940, it was reported that in many areas of the Reich local government was nearing a state of collapse on account of the shortage of personnel. To try to avert chaos, a number of district governors were beginning to appoint women to manage departments in their offices³. But such moves were to be regarded as emergency measures, and in areas of less pressing need women were to continue to be restricted by the orders Hitler had given in 1936 and 1937. Frau Scholtz-Klink discovered this in 1942 when she supported the application of Dr. Ilse Esdorn, a Party member since 1937⁴, for promotion to the senior civil service post of

1. "2. VO über Massnahmen auf dem Gebiet des Beamtenrechts", RGB, 1940 I, 3 May, 1940, p. 732.

2. BA, op. cit., Reichshaushalts- und Besoldungsblatt Nr. 6, "Abfindung der weiblichen Beamten bei Verheiratung", 27 February, 1941, p. 90.

3. IfZ, MA 441/1, frame 2-750855, MadR, "Erneute Meldungen zum Personalmangel bei den Landratsämtern", 19 February, 1940.

4. BDC, Ilse Esdorn's Party Membership card.

of scientific adviser in the research institute where she worked as a botanist. Her candidature was also supported by the Director of the institute and by the National Forestry Office, but a dispensation was required for the appointment in view of Hitler's ruling of July 1937. Frau Scholtz-Klink therefore approached an official of the Party office, Dr. Klopfer, who put the matter to Lammers with the recommendation that Frick's circular of 1940, allowing for the appointment of women "in suitable cases", did not apply in this instance¹. Dr. Klopfer received a prompt answer from an official in the Chancellery, to the effect that Hitler's order of 1937 was still in force as he had since voiced no other opinion on the matter, and that the post for which Dr. Esdorn was being recommended hardly came within the scope of the exceptions to which he had agreed. For this reason, the question of the shortage of senior civil servants, mentioned in Frick's circular, had no bearing on the matter².

Epilogue

It is hard to make a reasonable projection of what would have happened in peacetime to those women brought into professional positions as a result of the war, if Germany had won in 1941 or 1942. No doubt their short-term prospects would have been good, with male casualties and the low numbers of male students during the war.

1. BA, op. cit., copy of notes about the case of Ilse Esdorn, 5 February, 1942, and of a letter from Dr. Klopfer to Lammers, 18 February, 1942.

2. Ibid., letter from Lammer's office to Dr. Klopfer, 11 March, 1942.

But in the long term - as with employment in general - a new generation of qualified men would presumably have been given precedence, for reasons of population policy particularly. And yet, while the war had precipitated the need for professionally-qualified women, the demand was already there before it broke out. If there had been no war, there would still have been a considerable demand for such women, given the expansion, and intended further enlargement, of the Party's own organisations. Indeed, women were supposed to be restricted to matters involving women, children, marriage and the family; but to be able to cope with the administration of the women's organisations, and to provide the training, medical treatment and legal advice necessary in them it was essential that girls be admitted to universities in large numbers and given some practical professional training after graduation. The Party's view was that women should be organised by women - even if they were always ultimately subordinate to male authority - and so the most capable women had to be found for this function. Frau Scholtz-Klink came gradually to the conclusion that women with an academic education were eminently suitable here, as long as they allowed themselves to be wholeheartedly drawn into the women's work of the nation, and did not cut themselves off from members of their own sex who were in other occupations - particularly the housewife and mother.

Thus, a division was created between men and women in the same profession, after the massing together of all teachers, doctors, lawyers at first, in 1933, regardless of sex. This can, perhaps ironically, be seen as a return to the pre-Nazi system - the one the Nazis so roundly condemned - in which a strong element of feminism led to the creation of separate organisations for women who

nevertheless worked alongside men. The appointment of women representatives in the professional organisations as early as 1934 shows acceptance of the de facto situation, that women were quite firmly entrenched in the professions, even if positive encouragement was not given to them until autumn 1936; but it is clear that, almost from the start of the Nazi regime, "politically reliable", or even neutral, women were not to be driven out of the professions. However meagre the gains of the 1920s may have seemed to the feminists, they were the result of long years of campaigning and were not to be eradicated overnight on the whim of a governing élite whose ideology bore little relation to economic or social reality outside the abnormal conditions of a world depression.

No doubt the fundamental conflict between Party doctrine and the needs of the country would have continued, if the Nazis had survived, with men like Frick - who had to get the results - trying to circumvent orders issued by people removed from the reality of day-to-day government, people like Hitler and Bormann. The case of Ilse Esdorn well illustrates the mindlessness of the bureaucrats who unquestioningly accepted edicts from above, however irrational or impractical they might be, while the increasing use of qualified women by some local authorities for jobs normally done by men shows that those remote from the centre were often prepared to act in what seemed to them the most appropriate way, without feeling the need to ask the central Government or the Party whether there were doctrinal objections to their method.

CHAPTER SIX

The Nazi Organisation of WomenIntroduction

In contrast with the admission of women to formal political activity and even to prominent positions in the political parties of the left, the centre, and, to an extent, the right after 1918, the NSDAP's first general meeting in January 1921 unanimously passed the resolution that "Women cannot be admitted to the leadership or the executive committee of the Party". It is recorded that those women who attended the meeting supported this decision enthusiastically¹. Twenty-one years later, in the depths of the Second World War, Adolf Hitler was to boast that he had not only adhered to this resolution in the intervening period, but even surpassed it: "In no local section of the Party has a woman ever had the right to hold even the smallest post..."². At no time during the existence of the Nazi Party did the male leadership waver from its implacable opposition to feminism; indeed, it claimed that this did not mean that the Party favoured the subordination of women to men, but rather that there were men's affairs and women's affairs, and that the latter did not include active participation in political life. But in reality the result of this "equivalent but different" theory was that while women might exercise some control over their own organisations and activities, all that they did was required to remain strictly within the confines imposed on them by the exclusively male leadership of the Party.

Thus, it would be totally misleading to call any organisation

1. G. Franz-Willing, Die Hitlerbewegung, Hamburg, 1962, p. 82.

2. Hitler's Table-Talk, no. 126, 26 January, 1942 (evening), p. 252.

of Nazi women a "Nazi Women's Movement", for such a designation would imply that the specifically female activity that there undoubtedly was within the NSDAP had feminist aims and enjoyed a considerable degree of independence from Nazi men. The latter was certainly not the case, and if there were manifestations of feminism among the early female supporters of Hitler, these were finally eradicated once the immediate aim of the Party - the winning of political control in Germany - was achieved. A Nazi women's organisation, in fact, came into being only because it fulfilled certain needs of the male-dominated Party. It developed and became an integral and even essential part of Nazi Germany, but always in order to perform a particular function in the interests of the Party as a whole; if any benefit accrued to individual women, or even to groups of women, this was only ever incidental to the benefit derived by the Party. In this respect, the NSDAP was to some extent similar to both socialist parties, the SPD and the KPD, although it differed markedly from them in keeping women strictly out of the purely political struggle.

There were four distinct phases in the development of the Nazi women's organisation. In the first, in the later 1920s, there was some systematisation of what had begun as apparently spontaneous female "assistance" to the Storm Troopers. The formal takeover by the Party of the main group involved in this, in 1928, began a new period which was to last only until autumn 1931, when the Party reorganised its women's section in order to be prepared for the final assault on the Weimar democracy. The subordination of all other activity to the single-minded aim of seizing and then consolidating power allowed the development within the women's section - as within

the Party as a whole - of conflicting groupings and points of view, which were to give rise to considerable confusion and finally to a power struggle in winter 1933-34. The resulting victory for those who favoured unity and harmony above all within the Party and its member-organisations, strictly under Hitler's unchallenged leadership, brought forward Gertrud Scholtz-Klink as the leader who was to represent German womanhood from February 1934 until the end of the Third Reich. Her emergence ushered in a new phase, that of the detailed development of an integrated women's organisation which would carry out the will of the Party unquestioningly and involve German women in those activities considered suitable for them - and useful to the Party's political purpose at any given time. Constant propaganda managed most of the time to disguise the fact that the intricate administrative network evolved by Frau Scholtz-Klink and her staff was to some extent a façade, behind which there was relatively little real activity: the mass of German women did not want to be organised, and their passive resistance to attempts to involve the housebound housewife, above all, in the "women's work of the nation" ensured that the Nazi women's organisation remained very much a minority concern.

A. The Organisation of Nazi Women before the "Machtübernahme"

The nature of the early "assistance" given by women to the SA was completely in keeping with Nazi views about the role of women: it mainly consisted of first aid for those "comrades" wounded in street brawls and the provision of bowls of soup for indigent Party members. This was done on a local and completely spontaneous basis at first, without either central direction or planning of even a

short-term nature¹. The first sign of organisation in this area came with the founding of the "German Women's Order (of the Red Swastika)" (DFO) by Elsbeth Zander² in September 1923. This völkisch (racist-nationalist) group, which was formally affiliated to no political party, began to support and give aid to local Nazi groups, on its own initiative³. The value of this activity and the beginnings of the DFO's rationalisation on a national basis were recognised by the formal accrediting of the DFO as the women's auxiliary of the NSDAP at the 1926 Party Congress at Weimar. Elsbeth Zander, now official leader of the DFO⁴, wanted an even closer connection with the NSDAP, and at the end of 1927 she wrote to Hitler asking him to place the DFO under the direct jurisdiction of the Nazi Party⁵; this was effected in 1928⁶.

The DFO was now given formal regulations by the Party; these described its aims as: the removal of women from the disorders of party politics; the training of women in all aspects of nursing and welfare work; the affording of assistance to large families, to political prisoners, and to Germans abroad - especially those in the "occupied areas" taken from the Reich at Versailles; and the training of girls to become "racially conscious" German women and responsible

1. "Nationalsozialistische Frauenarbeit", FK, April 1937, p. 6.

2. Elsbeth Zander was born in 1888, remained unmarried, and joined the NSDAP on 1 April, 1926, with the low membership number of 33511. Information from BDC, her Party membership cards.

3. BA, Slg.Sch., 230, "Die National-Sozialistische Frauenschaft (Deutscher Frauenorden)", Meyers Konversations-Lexikon, 1932.

4. FK, op. cit., p. 7.

5. BA, op. cit., letter from Elsbeth Zander to Hitler, 12 December, 1927.

6. Ibid., Meyers Konversations-Lexikon, 1932.

members of the Volksgemeinschaft. Applicants for membership of the DFO had to be at least eighteen years of age and of German stock; and, confirming the inclusion of the DFO within the Party organisation, only women who were already full members of the NSDAP could be accepted into the DFO. The intention was clearly to make the DFO a tight-knit, reliable élite which would be more appropriate to the Kampfzeit (period of struggle) than an unwieldy mass organisation. As head of the DFO, Elsbeth Zander was designated Reichsführerin (National Leader)¹. She apparently had difficulty in persuading some of the existing members of the DFO to join the Nazi Party, and finally had to offer the incentive of a reduced membership fee together with the threat of being thrown out of the DFO for failure to join the Party². But the women's groups which supported the NSDAP were still not unified; there remained other organisations besides the DFO, of which the Frauenarbeitsgemeinschaften (Women's Work Groups) were the largest and most important³. There also remained a large number of women Party members who were content to remain such without feeling the need to join a specifically women's group⁴.

In the course of 1931 it became increasingly apparent that the continuing independence and the lack of co-ordination of much of the women's activity associated with the Party necessitated a fundamental

1. Ibid., "Richtlinien des Deutschen Frauenordens", n.d.

2. BDC, Slg. Sch., 230, notice from Elsbeth Zander, "An die Mitglieder des Deutschen Frauen-Ordens", 20 January, 1929.

3. FK, loc. cit.

4. BA, op. cit., "Die Organisation der nationalsozialistischen Frauen in der Nationalsozialistischen Frauenschaft", order signed by Gregor Strasser, 6 July, 1931.

overhaul of the women's groups. By the summer of that year such a task also became possible, as the Party's preoccupation with other internal matters diminished¹. The problem with the women's groups was not merely that there were several unrelated associations, but, more important, that the limits of the powers and functions of the main group, the DFO, had been left somewhat vague; thus there were variations in its activities and claims to jurisdiction, according to the extent of the local DFO leader's assertiveness and ambition. This contributed to a situation where leading members of the Party began to resent the activities and - as they saw it - the presumptuousness of the DFO. Goebbels, for one, felt that in his Berlin Gau the DFO was not firmly enough under his authority, and that its leadership was acting too independently of the Party machine to which it was, he understood, supposed to be subordinate. To try to exert greater control over the DFO, he sent instructions to his district leaders in June 1931 that they were to make a point of scrutinising and, if necessary, restricting the activities of the DFO in the districts². This, however, was intended as only a temporary expedient; Goebbels also wrote to the Party's Organisation Chief, Gregor Strasser, recommending that, as a matter of urgency, the DFO be dissolved and replaced by a new organisation for women Party members which would be more integrated into the structure of the Party itself, and therefore easier to control³.

1. Dietrich Orlow, The History of the Nazi Party, vol. I, Newton Abbott, 1971, p. 229.

2. BA, op. cit., letter from Goebbels to his district leaders, 10 June, 1931.

3. Ibid., letter from Goebbels to Gregor Strasser, 10 June, 1931.

Goebbels's apparently modest and reasonable request was the outward manifestation of deep discontent which had been mounting in his Gau at the activities and general demeanour of members of the DFO. It was felt that, far from giving "assistance" to the SA, the DFO was a positive liability; for one thing, its members were not trained nurses and did not even have medically-qualified supervision, although they claimed to be competent to cope with sick and wounded SA men. Even worse, they were said to comport themselves in a rowdy and vulgar manner, so that trained nurses were discouraged from joining in their work; and the DFO women insisted on working independently, refusing to co-operate with the SA's own emergency service, which was well established in Berlin, at least, by 1931. Dr. Conti, reporting these views to Goebbels, emphasised that he had plenty of witnesses to substantiate not only these complaints but also the even more serious one of corruption. The blame for all the trouble was attributed unequivocally to Elsbeth Zander herself, whom Conti described as a psychopath, and against whom he threatened to take proceedings in the Party's High Court unless there was a radical reform of the conduct and control of the DFO¹.

Goebbels's letter apparently confirmed an impression that was already forming in Strasser's mind², and was no doubt decisive in leading him to proceed at once to the preparation of an ordinance to transform the organisation of women's activity in the Party. On 6 July, 1931, he issued an order which was distinguished by its tact:

1. BDC, op. cit., report from Dr. L. Conti to Goebbels, 3 June, 1931.

2. BA, loc. cit.

"The hitherto existing women's organisations, which have only ever been able to embrace a section of National Socialist women, could not, with the best will in the world, perform the necessary tasks...."

This situation was to be remedied by the creation of a new body, to supersede the old ones, which was to come into existence on 1 October, 1931, and bear the name Nationalsozialistische Frauenschaft (NSF), the National Socialist Women's Group. All women Party members in each locality would automatically constitute the NSF organisation in the locality; thus there would no longer be the need to wait for Party members to apply for membership of the women's group. But the women's group was not to be a separate organisation in the local branches of the Party; it was merely the collective body of Nazi women in an area, which would perform the specifically women's tasks of the Party; as such, it was directly subordinate to the Party's local branch leader. He, however, was empowered - although not obliged - to appoint to his executive a woman representative who would be responsible for supervising the women's work. There was, in addition, to be a staff of advisers on women's affairs at the national level, which would transmit general policy guidelines to the Gau leaderships, and, through them, to the local branches¹.

The existing groups were to continue their work until 1 October, and then dissolve themselves, their members automatically becoming members of the NSF. Thus, members of the DFO, the Frauenarbeitsgemeinschaften, and the other women in the Party who had been members of neither of these groups, would all be brought together

1. BDC, op. cit., order by Gregor Strasser, 6 July, 1931.

under one constitution and one leadership. Elsbeth Zander had been consulted about the reform, "as leader of the biggest and oldest of the women's groups", and had given her agreement; no doubt consulting her was a wise move, since the allegiance of the DFO's individual members was, in the first instance, to her. As a quid pro quo for her co-operation - and in spite of the complaints made about her - she was appointed "adviser on women's affairs" in the Party's national leadership. This was not a breach of the 1921 resolution since her position was advisory, not executive, and was specifically concerned with women and not with the Party's activities in general. As a further token of recognition of the role played by the DFO in the Party's early days, Strasser decreed that the full title of the new organisation should be Nationalsozialistische Frauenschaft (Deutscher Frauenorden)¹.

In accordance with Strasser's schedule, the DFO held an extraordinary annual general meeting on 6 September, 1931, at which its dissolution was formally carried through at the national level². Communications between the national executive and the local groups seem to have been variable; the Berlin Gau DFO dissolved itself on 24 September³, and issued its organisation plan for the NSF on 1 October, as planned⁴; but the DFO continued to exist, as a group

1. Ibid.

2. BA, op. cit., "Ausführungsbestimmungen über die Neuorganisation der nationalsozialistischen Frauen in der Nationalsozialistischen Frauenschaft (Deutscher Frauenorden)", 1 November, 1931.

3. Ibid., "Rundschreiben nr. 26", Organisation Section of the NSDAP Gau Gross-Berlin, 24 September, 1931.

4. Ibid., "Organisations-Plan für die Arbeit der Frauenschaft", 1 October, 1931.

of thirty or forty women, in Trier after 1 October¹, and according to a report made in January 1932, it was into November 1931 before it was dissolved². The NSF organisation in Berlin, at least, at once busied itself enrolling women Party members in the new organisation and involving them in the provision of soup-kitchens for unemployed Party members, especially those in the SA, since winter was drawing in and prospects for the unemployed were growing only bleaker³. In addition, the Berlin NSF, under the energetic leadership of Fräulein von Gustedt, assumed responsibility for providing sustenance for participants in the large rallies being held by the Party in the city in autumn 1931⁴.

Strasser was well pleased with the new arrangements; the biggest advance, in his view, was that at all levels women's activity for the Party was now under the direct control of the political leadership; this meant, he felt, that women could be brought into work of a more general nature than hitherto. This work was to be divided into three broad categories: material aid in terms of food and clothing for the unemployed among the SA, as well as practical first aid; "culture and education", which largely meant propaganda to German women, to try to attract them to National Socialism; and training for housewives in domestic science, in keeping with Party ideology. This work was to be performed on a

1. Heyen, op. cit., "Berichte des Regierungspräsidenten von Trier an den Oberpräsidenten der Rheinprovinz", 13 October, 1931, p. 73.

2. Ibid., 14 January, 1932, p. 76.

3. BDC, op. cit., draft questionnaire for intending members of the NSF, and "Rundschreiben Nr. 1", "Rundschreiben Nr. 2", NSDAP Gau Gross-Berlin Frauenschaft, both dated 1 October, 1931.

4. Ibid., "Rundschreiben Nr. 6a", 9 November, 1931.

decentralised basis, with the locality as the basic organisational unit. The Party leader in the locality was instructed to choose the woman Party member he thought most suitable to be the NSF leader there. Similarly, each Gauleiter chose the NSF leader for his province, after consultation with Elsbeth Zander, as national NSF leader. The Gau NSF leader was similarly consulted by the Party's district leaders on the matter of choosing the district NSF leaders. Thus, although the NSF's work was decentralised, a chain of command was established from the locality through the district and the Gau to the national leadership, to ensure uniformity throughout Germany¹.

The powers of the NSF leaders at all levels were, in fact, very restricted, and almost exclusively advisory; the Gau NSF leader, for example, could not give orders to the leaders in the districts or the localities; her function was to give advice about how best to fulfil the policies determined by the Party leadership. Elsbeth Zander was appointed leader of the section for women's work in the Party Organisation office, to advise Strasser on all orders and policies he might contemplate which would affect women; she was allowed to suggest policies, also, but was given no independent decision-making power whatsoever². Her task, and that of all other NSF officials, was to find how best to implement the decisions of the Party as they affected women, not to question them. Elsbeth Zander's appointment in the Party Organisation office had one beneficial effect as far as Goebbels and his colleagues in Berlin

1. BA, op. cit., "Ausführungsbestimmungen...", 1 November, 1931.

2. Ibid.

were concerned, even if she was still in a position of some influence: it removed her from Berlin to Munich, so that she would no longer be a thorn in the flesh of the Berlin Party organisation.

The women who were in the leadership of the NSF along with Elsbeth Zander in 1931 and 1932 sometimes chafed at the tight rein imposed on them by the Party's central organisation. Strasser's somewhat prosaic outline of the NSF's tasks was given colour and flamboyance in the more detailed "Principles of the NS-Frauenschaft" produced by the women themselves. These certainly included the Party's basic idea that women, as guardians of the race and nation by virtue of their biological function, should cherish their maternal instincts, and that these should condition the kind of education and training given to girls and women. Also, there was the resolution that what was seen as the debasement of maternal instincts and the degradation of women's honour in the Republican period should be fiercely combated. But there was more spirit than the Nazi leaders might have wished for in the demands for a women's "renewal movement" and for the training of the most able women to take their place at the head of the nation¹. There are clear signs here of the kind of independence and even feminism which the Party had rejected from the start, with very little of the compliant docility it expected from its women. Their enthusiasm was not, however, to be checked at this time, when ardour and vigour were only too necessary, but once the Party had won power the female militants were to find that they were expendable.

Gregor Strasser - who was also to prove expendable - seems to

1. Ibid., "Grundsätze der Nationalsozialistischen Frauenschaft", n.d.

have had some sympathy for the militants' position, and was more than willing to give the NSF leaders increased scope for initiative. At a national conference of Gau NSF leaders in March 1932 he asked for opinions about the working of the 1931 regulations, and was convinced, as a result of the response he received, that the women's activity should be brought more into the mainstream of Party work, with the Party's leaders at the local level taking more of an interest in it than formerly. More opportunities should be provided, he felt, for the participation of women in useful Party work, and encouragement should be given wherever possible to stimulate the women's enthusiasm. This was particularly necessary, since the Presidential and Land elections in the early months of 1932 had clearly shown that the Nazi Party was making relatively little headway among women; the subordinate role assigned to women by the Party was hardly a vote-catcher outside the ranks of the Party faithful. By contrast, Strasser cited the power exerted in the election campaigns by the propaganda directed specifically at women by other parties¹. The Communists were, of course, stepping up their propaganda assault on women very considerably at this time²; the Bavarian People's Party had specifically warned women against the "chaos and civil war" which a Nazi victory would bring³; and there had been a vigorous - and successful - campaign by the female supporters of

1. IfZ, MA 644, frame 2-867017, "NSDAP: (1) Neuorganisation der nat.-soz. Frauenschaft", April 1932 (exact date not given).
2. See above, Chapter 1, pp. 17-18 and Chapter 2, pp. 79-80.
3. BA, "Reichstagswahl 1930", Augsburger Postzeitung, 14 September, 1930. I am most grateful to Dr. Geoffrey Pridham for pointing out this extract to me.

Hindenburg to attract women voters to the candidate of "stability and order"¹.

Strasser took it upon himself to give concrete assurance to women both in and outside the Party that the Nazis were not as anti-feminist as they had seemed; to this end, he upgraded the status of the NSF's leaders, by decreeing that the Gau NSF leaders should in future be full members of the Gau leadership. And, as a major innovation, the Gau NSF leaders were to be empowered to issue orders to the NSF leaders in the districts and the localities. Thus, the Gau NSF leader was allowed a degree of authority, some decision-making power, and higher status. The reservation was made that her orders and decisions must be in line with general Party policy, and in accordance with the particular policies of her own Gau leadership, to whose chief she was directly subordinate. On the other hand, Strasser emphasised that, equally, the Party's political leaders at all levels were to promote and support the work of the NSF in every way they could². This clearly did not find the welcome he had hoped among the male officials of the Party, since Strasser felt the need to send out a reminder about the last point to all Gau offices at the end of August 1932, and to stress the responsibility of the political leaders for ensuring that the NSF's resources were being put to the best use³.

1. Ibid., R45II/64, DVP Reichsgeschäftsstelle, Frauenrundschau, 4 March, 1932, "Deutscher Frauenausschuss für die Hindenburgwahl", and 6 April, 1932, "Zur Hindenburgwahl am 10. April".

2. IfZ, op. cit., frames 2-867017-18.

3. BA, Slg.Sch., 230, order by Strasser to all Gau leaderships, 31 August, 1932.

Strasser's insistence that women could play an extremely valuable role in the Party seemed to be underlined in September 1932 when, in his general reorganisation of the associations affiliated to the Party, he gave the NSF the status of a main department, as Hauptabteilung VIII, in the Party Organisation office; hitherto, the NSF had been only one of a number of groups constituting a main department¹. This move further enhanced the status of the NSF leaders at the national and Gau level, and especially that of Elsbeth Zander, the only woman in the Party leadership. In the absence of firm evidence, it can only be surmised that Strasser had decided that the antagonism felt towards her by some of the male Party officials² was at least partially unjustified, and that it was chiefly his protection which kept her at the head of the NSF; that she lost her leading position soon after his resignation adds credence to this interpretation. For the time being, on 1 October, 1932, Strasser issued a skeleton plan for the new department which was to form the broad basis of the NSF's organisational structure throughout the Third Reich³. Thus, in one year the organisation of Nazi women had been transformed from a loose association of groups affording material aid to Party members into a highly-centralised and closely-controlled body within the Party organisation itself and geared to the general political objectives of the NSDAP.

In the last months of the Kampfzeit, as a Nazi victory seemed

1. Orlow, op. cit., p. 274.

2. See above p. 335.

3. BA, op. cit., "Hauptabteilung VIII", 1 October, 1932.

tantalisingly close, this meant that the NSF was to engage vigorously in a variety of activities. Above all, its members were to continue to give first aid and sustenance to members of the SA and SS; they were also to try to raise funds for the Party - not for themselves, since they had no income and no treasury of their own - and to hold lectures, discussions and social evenings for their members and for potential recruits. NSF members were also to participate actively in election campaigns - especially the November Reichstag election campaign - in order to win over women to the Party at this vital time, and to improve the Party's image among the female population in general. It was felt especially important that young girls be attracted to the movement, and that they be given practical instruction in games and handwork with, naturally, a strong infusion of "political education"¹. The involvement of NSF women in this last area brought sharp opposition from within the Party itself: Baldur von Schirach, leader of the Hitler Youth, complained to Strasser in the strongest terms about the creation of "NS-Mädchenschaften" as youth groups associated with the NSF; these, he said, were clearly in competition with his own Bund deutscher Mädel². Schirach won his point; no doubt to avoid internal dissension at a crucial time - but also because the Nazis believed in monolithic bodies and rejected rivalry between organisations as wasteful and divisive - it was decreed that the NSF

1. Ibid.

Ibid., "Nationalsozialistische Frauenschaft", instructions issued in Gau München-Oberbayern, 25 February, 1932.

FK, op. cit., p. 8.

2. BA, op. cit., letter from Schirach to Strasser, 8 November, 1932.

girls' groups should be disbanded, and the Hitler Youth and its constituent associations given a monopoly of Nazi youth organisation¹.

But if the organisation of the NSF seemed smooth on the surface, at the national level, and if co-operation could eliminate some areas of dissension, there were rivalries and personal animosities within the women's organisation which were certainly apparent in 1932², and which would reach a climax in 1933-34. It seems reasonable to attribute much of the dissension to the way in which the NSF was created, with women who had worked relatively independently for the Party, whether in the work groups or as individual Party members, finding themselves now in a tightly-organised association at whose head was the leader of the former DFO, an organisation which they had obviously deliberately decided not to join. Discontent could also be found at the other end of the scale, with the NSF's leadership by no means always satisfied with the women who were supposed to be their representatives in the Gaue and at the more local level. An example of this was to be found in the case of Frau Polster, Gau NSF leader in North Westphalia. She had been appointed by Gauleiter Alfred Meyer on his own initiative, without the recommended consultation with the NSF leadership, and clearly regarded him as her superior, feeling no allegiance to Elsbeth Zander, and indeed - it was said - refusing to recognise her as leader of the NSF. This situation was felt by the

1. Ibid., Slg.Sch., 257, order signed by Strasser and Schirach, 7 July, 1932.

2. William Sheridan Allen, The Nazi Seizure of Power, London, 1966, p. 75, refers to the "internal bickering that characterised the Women's Auxiliary in Thalburg".

organisational chief of the NSF (with the title of Reichsinspekteurin), Dr. Käte Auerhahn, to be intolerable, and she complained to Meyer that Frau Polster was tactless, undisciplined, and, in short, not at all suitable to be a Gau NSF leader. Käte Auerhahn proposed to Meyer that he request Frau Polster's resignation, and threatened that if this was refused, she would bring proceedings in the Party's High Court against Frau Polster¹.

Meyer, however, was well aware of his powers as Gauleiter, and replied to Käte Auerhahn that Frau Polster might be somewhat impetuous, but had done prodigious work in building up the NSF in his Gau. In addition, he said - and this is the other essential part of the picture - Frau Polster had been grievously hindered by the unco-operativeness of some of her subordinate officials who had behaved in a way which was "anything but National Socialist". Alfred Meyer was prepared to investigate the charges made against his Gau NSF leader, but he made it very clear that the decision as to whether she should be dismissed or not lay with him, and not with the NSF's national leadership². In the event, he chose to retain Frau Polster, who enjoyed a long period of office - compared with many of the pre-1933 Gau NSF leaders - and was still to be found as NSF leader in North Westphalia in November 1937³, long after Käte Auerhahn and Elsbeth Zander had faded into complete obscurity. Meyer's attitude and actions well illustrate how little real power even the

1. BDC, Käte Auerhahn's file, letter from Käte Auerhahn to Alfred Meyer, 8 August, 1932.
2. Ibid., letter from Alfred Meyer to Käte Auerhahn, 15 August, 1932.
3. Ibid., Slg.Sch., 230, list of Gau NSF leaders, 10 November, 1937.

national leadership of the NSF had, and how dependent a Gau NSF leader was on the good will of her Gauleiter. They also underlined the primacy of the male political leadership in the NSDAP, in every sphere of its activity, which was to prevail throughout the Third Reich even as the organisation of Nazi women became more sophisticated and, at least apparently, more autonomous.

B. The Power-struggle in the Nazi Women's Organisation, 1933-34

With the appointment of Hitler as Chancellor on 30 January, 1933, the task of the NS-Frauenschaft became, in the words of the official account, "the construction of the work of women in the Third Reich and the education of the entire female population of Germany to think in the National Socialist way"¹. It was not to be as straightforward as that. The dissolution of the non-Nazi women's groups was achieved easily enough², even if there remained throughout the Nazi era pockets of resistance to the complete ordering of women's affairs by the NSF, and, controlling it, the Party³. The most immediate problem, however, was an internal one, that of the leadership of the NSF itself. The in-fighting over this issue involved not only the women of the NSF, but also the leaders of the Party's organisation machine and other Party notables, and was considered so harmful to a movement which stressed unity, authority and harmony that it was kept out of the Party's press as

1. FK, loc. cit.

2. See above, Chapter 1, pp. 31-37.

3. Examples of this will be given later in this Chapter.

far as possible at the time; subsequently, when the story of the development of Nazi women's activity came to be related - the Nazis were fascinated by the history of their own movement - the events of the first year of Nazi rule were glossed over with brief generalisations¹.

Given the meticulousness with which the Nazis kept their records, particularly once the Party's own archive was inaugurated in 1934², the complete absence of documentary evidence for women's affairs between October 1932 and January 1934, and the paucity of evidence between January and March 1934, suggests that great pains were taken to destroy documents regarded as damning, so that no trace would be left of the leadership struggle. But some material did survive, in the proceedings of the Party's High Court which were no doubt overlooked when the process of expurgation was taking place. This material is sufficiently substantial to permit a reasonable attempt at a reconstruction of the events which the Nazis were so anxious to conceal, although areas of doubt necessarily remain. What is perhaps most puzzling of all is why the Nazis should have been so single-mindedly determined to cover all trace of the leadership struggle in the relatively unimportant area of women's affairs;

1. FK, op. cit., pp. 6-8. The account given here was apparently considered authoritative, since it was reproduced verbatim in Nachrichtendienst der Reichsfrauenführerin, April 1937, pp. 90-95, and May 1937, pp. 114-21. An almost identical account was given in Der Neue Tag, Prague, 3 April, 1941 (Wiener Library Personality File G15).

"5 Jahre Reichsfrauenführung", FK, February 1939, p. 3, categorically dates the beginning of the "women's work" of the Third Reich from 24 February, 1934, the date of Gertrud Scholtz-Klink's appointment as NSF leader.

2. BDC, Slg.Sch., 211, letter from Reichsschulungsleiter Gohdes to all Party and State officials and to journalists, 30 January, 1934.

their obsession with presenting at least the outward appearance of unity may not seem a totally satisfactory explanation, but it is the only obvious one.

Gregor Strasser had realised that the creation of the NSF in 1931 brought together in one centralised organisation a large number of Party members and officials who had been active solely in their own region and did not know each other. The two national meetings of Gau NSF leaders which he convened in March and October 1932 were largely designed to bring these women into contact with each other. Prominent among those present were Paula Siber and Gertrud Scholtz-Klink, who quickly agreed that they were opposed to Elsbeth Zander's leadership of the NSF¹. Paula Siber, born in 1893 and married to a Major in the army, with one son, had joined the NSDAP in 1931, after working informally for it for a year, and almost at once became Gau NSF leader in Düsseldorf². Gertrud Scholtz-Klink, born in 1902, first married to a headmaster and eventually mother of four children, had joined the Party in about 1929 and become Gau NSF leader first in Baden and then, in addition, in Hesse³.

Whether the combined opposition of Paula Siber and Gertrud

1. BDC, AOPG, 2684/34, letter from Paula Siber to Erich Hilgenfeldt, 14 January, 1935.
2. BDC, Paula Siber's Party membership card and "Lebenslauf", 16 February, 1938.
3. Ibid., Party membership card, NSLB card, and Party employee's salary card.

Cutting from Der Neue Tag, Prague, 3 April, 1941, Wiener Library Personality File G15.

Different sources place her date of entry to the Party as being in 1929 or 1930, with Professor Charles Singer, in his Nachlass in the Wiener Library PF G15 putting it as early as 1928. Even her Party membership card gives 1929 and 1930 in different places.

Scholtz-Klink, along with a number of other NSF leaders whom they won over, had much bearing on the dismissal of Elsbeth Zander from the leadership of the NSF is difficult to tell, since she disappeared almost without trace, and there is no record of her going. It does seem likely that the resignation of Gregor Strasser from his position as Reich Organisation Leader on 8 December, 1932, and Hitler's subsequent campaign to discredit him and his work¹, was a factor in her removal from office, if only because with Strasser's departure there was no one left to defend her. However, she seems to have hung on to her position until the spring of 1933; William Sheridan Allen describes a meeting addressed by Elsbeth Zander, "the National Leader of the Nazi Women's Auxiliary", on 2 March in "Thalburg"², and Paula Siber writes of "the new leader of the NSF", referring to the situation in June 1933³.

Elsbeth Zander remains a shadowy figure, and it is clear that this was precisely what the Party leadership intended to happen. She appears in a relatively humble position in the Gau leadership office in Kurmark in July 1934, and two months later is awarded the Party's highest honour, the Gold Badge, as a veteran Party member. It is tempting to conclude that she accepted her dismissal from office with a good grace, and was rewarded with a steady job and a medal for going quietly. At any rate, she was still a member of the Party and an employee in the Kurmark Gau leadership in February 1941. Enquiries

1. Orlow, op. cit., pp. 293-94.

2. Allen, op. cit., p. 150. Allen wrongly cites Fräulein Zander's Christian name as "Elisabeth" on more than one occasion.

3. BDC, AOPG, 2684/34, letter from Paula Siber to Gertrud Scholtz-Klink, 21 May, 1934.

about her past and current activities elicited a bare, sometimes a sharp, response: in 1938 the Gau leadership in Thuringia was told simply her date of birth, entry date to the NSDAP and membership number, and her address in Kurmark, with the additional remark that she held the Party's Gold Badge. A request for information in 1940 by a private individual, Martha Schmidt, not herself a Party member, was met by the reply that "information about Party members is imparted only to Party offices and officials"¹. Another of the old guard, Käte Auerhahn, was summoned to Party headquarters in the Brown House in Munich at the beginning of February 1933, which suggests promotion, but she, too, was relegated to obscurity; Paula Siber was to claim that she and Gertrud Scholtz-Klink had been opposed to giving her a leading role². Whether this was or was not the cause of Käte Auerhahn's failure to succeed Elsbeth Zander, she left Munich for Heidelberg in October 1933, and seems not to have had any further Party employment, her occupation thenceforth being described as "housewife"³.

Once Elsbeth Zander had been removed, the choice of a successor lay jointly in the hands of Hess, as head of the Party's Central Political Committee, with Bormann as his chief of staff, and Robert Ley, Hitler's chief of staff at the Party Organisation office. This duality of control over Hauptabteilung VIII, the NSF, was the result of the deliberate division of the authority Strasser alone had formerly

1. BDC, Elsbeth Zander's Party membership cards, Partei-Kanzlei Korrespondenz, and Dr. Konrad Witzmann's file.
2. Ibid., AOPG, 2684/34, letter from Paula Siber to Erich Hilgenfeldt, 14 January, 1935.
3. BDC, Käte Auerhahn's Party membership card and letter from the Gauschatzmeister, Baden, to the Membership Office at Party HQ, 12 December, 1940.

held¹. The Party bosses together chose as the new NSF leader a twenty-six-year-old girl, Lydia Gottschewski, who had recently been national leader of the BdM². She was not, however, given Elsbeth Zander's former place in the Party leadership. It soon became clear that Lydia Gottschewski was an unfortunate choice. Although she fulfilled a useful function by violently ridiculing the middle-class women's movement, and Gertrud Bäumer in particular³, she was extremely outspoken, often sounding uncomfortably feminist to the Party leadership. Her aim was to create a new "women's movement" to replace the old, pacifist, internationalist one, and she claimed that a society dominated by theories of male superiority would be a divided society⁴. For a time, however, she carried with her the support of about half of the Gau NSF leaders⁵, but the opposition of the remainder, again led by Paula Siber and Gertrud Scholtz-Klink⁶, created a situation that was both unstable and unproductive.

This was further aggravated by the fact that, now the Party was in Government, the conflict and confusion which was apparent in 1933 between competing agencies of Party and State over the limits of their

1. Orlow, op. cit., p. 295.

2. BDC, AOPG 2684/34, letter from Paula Siber to Gertrud Scholtz-Klink, 21 May, 1934.

BA, Slg.Sch., 251, "Richtlinien für den 'BdM'",

3. Lydia Gottschewski, "Zur Einführung", Die Deutsche Frauenfront, August 1933, p. 1.

4. Lydia Gottschewski, Männerbund und Frauenfrage, Munich, 1934, pp. 8-9, 13, 20, 39-43, 70-77.

5. BDC, op. cit., statement by Bormann, 30 May, 1934.

6. Ibid., letter from Paula Siber to Bormann, 22 May, 1934.

jurisdiction had its effect on the women's organisation. Wilhelm Frick, as Reich Minister of the Interior, maintained that at least some of the responsibility for running the affairs of German women should lie with his Ministry, and it was with this in mind that he appointed Paula Siber to be his "adviser on women's affairs" on 12 June, 1933. Her immediate task was, as

"representative of German women and of the women's organisations /to/ bring together in the service of the national community the various women's groups in a united National Federation of German Women's Organisations",

under the authority of the Minister of the Interior¹. This activity brought her into immediate conflict with Lydia Gottschewski, who was engaged in exactly the same task, the bringing of all German women's organisations into a new combine, the Frauenfront (Women's Front), this time under the leadership and control of the Party². As far as Hess and Ley were concerned, this was the only right thing to do, since in their view anything affecting group activity was a Party matter³.

Already, however, opposition to Lydia Gottschewski was mounting from a number of quarters. Gertrud Scholtz-Klink clashed with her at a Gau NSF leaders' meeting in June 1933, and the next month led a deputation of Gau NSF leaders to Berlin to report that the condition of the NSF could only be described as disconsolate and uncertain⁴. Frau

1. Ibid.

2. Lydia Gottschewski, Die Deutsche Frauenfront, loc. cit.

BDC, op. cit., letter from Walter Buch to Dr. G. A. Krummacker, 20 September, 1933.

3. Ibid., statement by Bormann, 30 May, 1934.

4. Ibid., letter from Paula Siber to Gertrud Scholtz-Klink, 21 May, 1934.

von Hadeln, leader of the conservative Bund Königin Luise, which had supported Hitler in the 1932 elections and joined the Frauenfront immediately on its creation, complained that Lydia Gottschewski had refused to admit the BKL to the work of the Frauenfront, and had actually encouraged NSF members to launch verbal attacks on the BKL. Frau von Hadeln - an army officer's wife who was not herself a Party member - found a sympathetic listener in Walter Buch, chairman of the Party High Court, who passed on her complaints to Bormann, and who now became an enemy of Lydia Gottschewski in a powerful position¹.

Thus, although Hess and Ley wanted to uphold her position against Paula Siber's, they found that Lydia Gottschewski was fast becoming a liability, and finally her "position became untenable on organisational grounds", as Bormann later put it. She was replaced as leader of the NSF in mid-September 1933 by Dr. Gottfried Adolf Krummacher², a local government official in the Rhineland and member of the Prussian Landtag, who had been a Party member since 1930³. Since it had become clear that the women were incapable of ordering their own affairs rationally and amicably, and since considerable damage was being done to the image of the Party and the effectiveness of its women's organisation, the Party leaders had decided to see if

1. Ibid., letter from Walter Buch to Dr. Krummacher, 20 September, 1933.

2. Ibid., letter from Paula Siber to Gertrud Scholtz-Klink, 21 May, 1934.

Stockhorst, op. cit., p. 254.

3. BDC, G. A. Krummacher's Party membership card, and letter from the Gauleitung, Köln-Aachen, to the Reich Leadership of the NSDAP, 1 September, 1934.

a man could restore authority and order. One result of these events was that the Labour Service Leader, Hierl, insisted for a long time that a man should be put in charge of the Women's Labour Service, although Gertrud Scholtz-Klink had, at Ley's request, drawn up an organisation plan for it, and her name had been put forward for this post. Dr. Krummacher, in fact, held this position until January 1934, when, in spite of his protests, Frau Scholtz-Klink was finally created leader of the Women's Labour Service¹, the first of a number of offices which she was soon to amass.

This overriding of Dr. Krummacher's wishes in January 1934 was an accurate reflection of how low his stock had sunk in four months. Far from resolving the divisions in the women's organisation, his appointment had, if anything, made them more acute. Paula Siber, particularly, resented it, since she had seen herself as the obvious candidate to succeed Lydia Gottschewski - and also because she believed that women's affairs should be under the leadership of a woman. She also claimed that she had the support of the Gau NSF leaders, although Bormann was prepared to concede only that she and Lydia Gottschewski each had the support of half of them². Paula Siber was also proud of having created the new mass organisation of German women - in contrast with the NSF, which was the élite leadership group - the Deutsches Frauenwerk (DFW), which was recognised by the leaderships of both

1. Ibid., AOPG 2684/34, loc. cit.

Nieuwenhuysen, op. cit., p. 234.

2. BDC, op. cit., letter from Paula Siber to Bormann, 22 May, 1934.

Ibid., statement by Bormann, 30 May, 1934.

Party and State in September 1933 as the superseder of both the Frauenfront and her own Federation¹. But at this same point in time she had to accept a compromise reached by Hess and Frick in September 1933, by which she was appointed deputy leader of the DFW, whose head was to be Dr. Krummacher, the NSF leader. He, for his part, returned Paula Siber's animosity, seeing her appointment as an anomaly and a potential source of discord, since she was responsible to Frick, and not to the Brown House².

In Dr. Krummacher the Party leaders had made another bad choice. For one thing, his holding of other offices besides those in the women's organisation meant that he could not give the latter the attention it required at this crucial time. As Landrat in Gummersbach, in the Rhineland, and holder of other provincial appointments, he spent relatively little time in Munich, on NSF business. Moreover, since the DFW's central office was in Berlin he seldom managed to visit it; Paula Siber asserted that on the few occasions he did, he created confusion by countermanding orders he had previously given. In a long report on the state of the DFW, made in mid-January 1934, she attributed to Dr. Krummacher's neglect, indecisiveness and abrasive manner the fact that the DFW had no funds, no plans for future activity, and that a number of the organisations enrolled in it were now applying to withdraw. There was, in Paula Siber's view, plenty that the DFW could do - indeed must do - in the Nazi State, but this would be possible only if immediate action were taken to prevent its collapse,

1. Ibid., letter from Paula Siber to Bormann, 22 May, 1934.

2. Ibid., letter from Dr. Krummacher to Frick, 25 April, 1934.

and to give it firm direction¹. Naturally enough, Dr. Krummacher saw the situation differently, and blamed Paula Siber, who, being permanently based in Berlin, was in charge of the day-to-day running of the DFW, for the confused and demoralised condition of the organisation².

To try to remedy the situation, Dr. Krummacher tried to transfer the DFW's office to Munich; this would have the two-fold benefit of easing his own travelling problem and removing the DFW's affairs from Paula Siber's control completely, since her position in the Ministry of the Interior kept her in Berlin. The agreement which had been reached by Frick and Hess in September 1933 did not provide for such a move, but Ley, the other Party boss with direct authority over the women's organisation, had no compunction in giving Krummacher's proposal the Party's approval. Krummacher has perhaps been unfortunate in having been branded the villain of the piece³; he seems to have had considerable problems, not least in feeling genuinely in doubt about the "limits of responsibility" for the DFW between the Party and the Ministry of the Interior, since the Frick-Hess agreement had left that question open - no doubt to avoid conflict. Frick continued to assert that he was the "protector" of the DFW, while Hess and Ley were of the opinion that the DFW was subordinate to the Party's authority. Krummacher, anxious to avoid being the cause of strife between the two,

1. Ibid., Paula Siber, "Bericht über das DFW", 15 January, 1934.

2. Ibid., letter from Dr. Krummacher to Frick, 25 April, 1934.

3. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., pp. 60-61, is critical of Dr. Krummacher while calling Paula Siber "tolerant and conciliatory". He seems unaware of the deeper, underlying conflict between Party and State over the leadership issue.

asked that they decide the matter between themselves¹.

He did not, however, manage to avoid becoming a scapegoat: because of his "organisational blunders", as Bormann put it, he was relieved of his positions in the women's organisation at the end of January 1934. Hess was now determined that order should be brought out of the confusion into which the women's organisation had been allowed to drift, and appointed Erich Hilgenfeldt, who was leader of the Party's welfare organisation, the NSV, leader of the NSF. Hilgenfeldt was regarded as a strong man who would be able to resolve the conflicts and problems of the women's organisation; Hess found it additionally suitable that there should be close co-operation between the welfare organisation and the NSF, since women were expected to play a large part in welfare activities in the Nazi State. But the problem of duality of control over women's affairs remained, and so Hess - who had always seen this as anomalous and damaging - decided that the time had come for the Party to assume sole control of the DFW, and to place its leadership in the hands of the leader of the NSF, namely Hilgenfeldt². To do this, however, would be to provoke a direct confrontation with Paula Siber and, more important, with Frick. The evidence available overwhelmingly suggests that the Party leadership came to the conclusion that the only way to achieve their aim without causing an ugly, and possibly a public, conflict between themselves and the Minister of the Interior was to act quickly to discredit Paula Siber in such a way that Frick would be unable to uphold her position. With her removed, the Party could take

1. BDC, loc. cit.

2. Ibid., statement by Bormann, 30 May, 1934.

over the functions she had exercised, and there would be little chance for Frick to reverse the position at a later date.

With a mandate from the Party to proceed quickly and decisively, then, Hilgenfeldt assumed the leadership of the DFW as well as the NSF, and at once ordered an inspection of its accounts¹. While this was being carried out, Hilgenfeldt agreed to meet the Gau NSF leaders, who were perplexed by the changes in the leadership and in any case hoped that a woman would again be appointed. When Gertrud Scholtz-Klink's name was suggested - presumably at the Party leaders' instigation - on 21 February, 1934, Paula Siber was completely taken aback and did all she could to persuade Hilgenfeldt that Frau Scholtz-Klink would be an unwise choice. She had no doubt expected that she would now be the obvious candidate, since she did enjoy substantial support among the Gau NSF leaders, compared with Gertrud Scholtz-Klink who was less well-known nationally. Nevertheless, on 24 February Gertrud Scholtz-Klink's appointment to leadership of the NSF and the DFW - in addition to the position she already held as leader of the Women's Labour Service - was announced. Paula Siber now, with a fairly good grace, agreed to accept this, and promised to co-operate fully with the new leader, resentful though she was that, as founder of the DFW, she was not to be permitted to lead it².

The Party leadership, however, wanted her removed from any position of prominence, since she had, so it seemed, caused nothing but trouble by her apparent inability to collaborate peaceably

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid., letter from Paula Siber to Gertrud Scholtz-Klink, 21 May, 1934.

with any of the NSF leaders appointed by the Party, from Elsbeth Zander onwards¹. In addition, she may have had support among the Gau NSF leaders, but she had also antagonised and, apparently, manoeuvred against, some of them². Her speeches had even begun to show a self-confidence bordering on independence, as well as traces of feminism³: in short, she had become a liability in herself, quite apart from being an obstacle to complete control by the Party over the organisation of women.

The inspection of the DFW's accounts which Hilgenfeldt had ordered revealed a discrepancy which suggested that the person in charge of them, Paula Siber, was guilty of either mismanagement or embezzlement. At the same time as this was discovered, early in March 1934, the charge was laid against Paula Siber, by Charlotte Hauser - for a short time an official of the DFW - that she had pocketed money collected at DFW meetings to finance her own publications⁴. This was either extremely convenient for the Party bosses or - which seems more likely - the result of collusion between Hilgenfeldt and Charlotte Hauser, who had a grudge against Paula Siber, and who was admitted by Hilgenfeldt to have "deficiencies of character"⁵.

1. Ibid., statement by Bormann, 30 May, 1934.

2. Ibid., letters to Hilgenfeldt from Gau NSF leader M. Blass and E. Moll (Sekretariat Florian), both dated 10 March, 1934.

3. BDC, Paula Siber's file, letter from Paula Siber to Hinkel, in the Prussian Ministry of Education, 16 February, 1934.

Gertrud Bäumer certainly thought that Paula Siber was trying to start a new women's movement which would challenge the male chauvinism of National Socialism, BA, Kl.Erw., 296-(1), letter from Gertrud Bäumer to Dorothee von Velsen, 23 October, 1933.

4. BDC, AOPG, 2684/34, statement by Bormann, 30 May, 1934.

Ibid., statement by Paula Siber, 2 June, 1934.

Ibid., letter from Paula Siber to Bormann, 22 May, 1934.

5. Ibid., letter from Hilgenfeldt to Major Siber, 14 March, 1934.

On the basis of these two points, the faulty finances of the DFW - discovered by an investigator who, Paula Siber claimed, regarded her with animosity¹ - and Charlotte Hauser's accusation, Hilgenfeldt began his manoeuvre to oust Paula Siber from active participation in the women's organisation. On 9 March, he sent a telegram banning her from public speaking², and a few days later threatened that if she did not resign from her position in the Ministry of the Interior he would publicise the charges against her and generally blacken her name in such a way that it would be impossible for her to continue in her position³. Frick, in fact, suspended her from office on 17 March, while he carried out his own investigation of her activities; this satisfied him that, while she had perhaps shown a lack of competence in some respects, she had not behaved dishonestly and was an enthusiastic worker. Accordingly, he reinstated her in office on 12 May, 1934⁴.

As far as Frick was concerned, the question of where authority over the women's organisation lay was still an open one⁵. But Hilgenfeldt was not to be stopped now, and refused to work with Paula Siber. She came to the conclusion that, now that she was excluded from the work of the DFW, her position in Frick's Ministry had lost its function, and so, reluctantly, she felt obliged to tender her

1. Ibid., letter from Paula Siber to Gertrud Scholtz-Klink, 21 May, 1934.

2. Ibid., telegram from Hilgenfeldt to Paula Siber, 9 March, 1934.

3. Ibid., letter from Paula Siber to Bormann, 22 May, 1934.

4. Ibid., letters from Frick to Hilgenfeldt and Paula Siber, 12 May, 1934.

5. Ibid., letter from Frick to Hilgenfeldt, 12 May, 1934.

resignation, with effect from 1 July, 1934¹. Thus, the central objective of the Party leadership was achieved, and the control of all the organisational activity of women in the Third Reich was in the hands of the Party. Hilgenfeldt retained his title as "Head of the NS-Frauenschaft"², but had little more to do with the affairs of the women's organisation; these were ordered by Gertrud Scholtz-Klink, under the supervision of Hess and Ley.

Paula Siber was never again to hold office in the women's organisation. She damned herself conclusively in the eyes of the Party leadership by bringing a libel suit against Hilgenfeldt in the Party's High Court, a case which dragged on from June until December 1934. Indeed she won in the end a retraction by Hilgenfeldt of his charges against her of "dishonourable behaviour"³, but this did not achieve her aim of full public rehabilitation, after the damage done to her reputation by Hilgenfeldt's public assertions that she had been guilty of corruption. Throughout 1935 she and her husband campaigned for her rehabilitation which, they pointed out in the massive correspondence with which they bombarded Party leaders, could be achieved only by reinstatement in office⁴. But they were fighting a losing battle, and fighting it in total ignorance of the deeper issues involved. Paula Siber naively wrote to Bormann, asking

1. Ibid., letter from Paula Siber to Bormann, 22 May, 1934.

2. BDC, Erich Hilgenfeldt's Party membership card, dated 1 March, 1939.

3. Ibid., AOPG, 2684/34, statement by Hilgenfeldt, 5 December, 1934.

4. The large volume of detailed material relating to the case in the Party's High Court and to the correspondence between the Sibers and Party officials is to be found in BDC, loc. cit.. Limitations of space prevent a full discussion of this material here.

for his support¹, obviously unaware of his attitude. This was unequivocally revealed in a confidential letter to Walter Buch, chairman of the Party's High Court, in which he wrote:

"The exclusion of Frau Sieber [sic] from the handling of women's affairs lay completely within the policy of the Party leadership, since the activity of Frau Sieber as adviser for women's affairs in the Ministry of the Interior led to constant unrest".

He added that since her departure there had at last been peace and harmony within the women's organisation². Hilgenfeldt, too, wrote to Buch, to explain that he had become involved in the matter only to prevent a split in the women's organisation, and harboured no personal animosity against Paula Siber³. She was at least right in deducing that Hilgenfeldt's aim was her complete exclusion from the women's organisation⁴; but she remained in ignorance of the role he was performing, as the agent of the Party leadership. She was further mistaken in imagining that her former associate, Gertrud Scholtz-Klink, would come to her aid⁵; on the contrary, the new women's leader threatened to resign if Paula Siber was again given a position in the women's organisation⁶.

Paula Siber had more reasonably expected that Frick would act as her champion, and in February 1935 she asked him to demonstrate his

1. Ibid., letter from Paula Siber to Bormann, 22 May, 1934.

2. Ibid., letter from Bormann to Buch, 1 October, 1934.

3. Ibid., letter from Hilgenfeldt to Buch, 3 November, 1934.

4. Ibid., Paula Siber's accusation against Hilgenfeldt, 2 June, 1934.

5. Ibid., letter from Paula Siber to Hilgenfeldt, 14 January, 1935.

6. Ibid., letter from Gertrud Scholtz-Klink to Hess, 20 December, 1934.

confidence in her by giving her another position¹. His reply was most encouraging², but nothing concrete emerged, and it fell to Pfundtner, months later, to answer her repeated reminders with the information that "so far it has unfortunately not been possible to reinstate you in the women's work"³. By this time, July 1935, it was too late for Frick to try to regain influence over the women's organisation; its development was proceeding smoothly under Party control, and he himself had had many other interests and involvements during the period of the "Siber affair". He did, however, warmly recommend Paula Siber for work in the Reich Chamber of Culture⁴, to which she had applied, faute de mieux⁵, and she worked there in the Reich Committee of Journalists until 1937, and after that became a free-lance journalist⁶. For someone who had caused so much trouble for the Party leadership, she was perhaps fortunate to emerge unscathed, even if she finally had to abandon her ambition of playing a decisive role in the Nazi organisation of women.

1. Ibid., letter from Paula Siber to Frick, 2 February, 1935.

2. Ibid., letter from Frick to Paula Siber, 22 February, 1935.

3. Ibid., letter from Pfundtner to Paula Siber, 23 July, 1935.

4. BDC, Paula Siber's file, letter from Metzner, at the Ministry of the Interior, to Hinkel, at the Reich Chamber of Culture, 28 January, 1936.

5. Ibid., letter from Paula Siber to Hinkel, 5 September, 1935.

6. Ibid., Paula Siber, "Lebenslauf", 16 February, 1938.

C. The Women's Leaders, Women's Organisation and "Women's Work" in the Third Reich

While Paula Siber had been fighting for reinstatement, Gertrud Scholtz-Klink had been proceeding with the task of unifying the women's organisational activity of the nation. She was helped initially by a barrage of propaganda to the effect that the apparent problems of the first year of Nazi rule had been of small consequence, but had been exaggerated in the press - an implausible story, given the strict censorship that was in force. Orders now went out that any statement about the NSF, the DFW, the women's Labour Service, or relations between these organisations, was to be vetted by a senior NSF official before publication or exposition¹. From the spring of 1934, the Nazi women's organisation was, particularly on the surface, but for the most part also in its local branches as well as its national leadership, a model of harmony and a faithful agent of the Party Organisation's political and social policies.

For this, the Party owed a debt of gratitude to Gertrud Scholtz-Klink; at last, in her, the Party bosses had made a wise choice. She was to provide the two things they sought in their women's leader, co-operation - at times to the point of toadying - and a firm hand to ensure obedience and uniformity within her organisations. Her reward was to become a show-piece woman, the one representative of, and yardstick for, the German woman; she was not built up as a charismatic figure - this treatment was accorded to the Führer alone -

1. BA, Slg.Sch., 230, "Gau-Verordnungsblatt 2/34", Altona, 1 March, 1934.

but rather she became the personification of human womanly achievement and virtue in the Nazi State. Her value to the Party was quickly recognised, and in November 1934 she was accorded the title of Reichsfrauenführerin, National Women's Leader¹. Her unchallenged dominance in the women's organisation was underlined by her being invested as leader of every group involving women. She retained her position as leader of the Women's Labour Service when she was appointed leader of both the NSF and the DFW in February 1934². Then, in July 1934, when Ley created a Women's Office in the Labour Front he chose Frau Scholtz-Klink to be its leader³. In the following month, she was appointed "adviser for the protection of women at work" on a committee of the NSBO⁴. Already she had become leader of the National Women's Association of the German Red Cross, "by virtue of her appointment" as NSF leader, and in the years that followed she continued to amass new titles and new offices⁵.

Frau Scholtz-Klink's holding of positions in organisations whose members were predominantly male gave women representation in these, and thus gave at least the impression that women were being fully involved in most aspects of German life, contrary to what were characterised as misconceptions, and even lies, perpetrated abroad about women being totally excluded from all activities outside

1. "5 Jahre Reichsfrauenführung", FK, February 1939, p. 3.

2. BA, loc. cit.

3. Ibid., "Einrichtung eines Frauenamtes in der DAF, 12.7.34", NS-Korrespondenz, no. 162, 13 July, 1934.

4. BDC, Partei-Kanzlei Korrespondenz, letter from an NSBO official to Gertrud Scholtz-Klink, 28 August, 1934.

5. E.g., she became a member of the honorary leadership of the RdK in May 1936, and leader of a section in the Praesidium of the German Red Cross on 1 January, 1938. FK, op. cit., pp. 3-5.

the home in Nazi Germany¹. But, in truth, her status within the NSDAP remained a source of doubt and disagreement. Bormann eventually issued a statement in October 1937, to clarify the matter, to the effect that Frau Scholtz-Klink held the rank of Hauptamtsleiter, leader of a main department, in the national leadership of the Party². Nominally, this put a woman in the top rank of the Party élite; but this was not in fact a contradiction of Party policy, since she carried no authority outside the women's organisations, and thus had little real power within the Party itself, and none at all in the Government. As late as January 1938, she had to admit that she had never had the chance to discuss the women's organisation and its activities with Hitler³, but she did have contact with leading members of the Party, quite apart from the normal course of business where she was frequently in communication with Hess and Ley. There was, for example, a fairly regular correspondence between Gertrud Scholtz-Klink and Alfred Rosenberg between 1935 and 1939, at least; sometimes this concerned invitations to speaking engagements, sometimes it was merely of the order of birthday greetings⁴. And the National Women's Leader's position was sufficient to ensure that she was regarded as a valuable

1. "Einsatz der Frau in der Nation", speech by Gertrud Scholtz-Klink at the 1937 Party Congress, published by the DFW.

Trude Bürkner, quoted in Die Frau, April 1937, p. 402.

2. BDC, op. cit., "Rundschreiben nr. 128/37", issued by Hess's office, 6 October, 1937.
3. BA, R43II/427, letter from Gertrud Scholtz-Klink to Bormann, 24 January, 1938.
4. IfZ, MA 253, Rosenberg-Akten, e.g. frames 677-78, 683, 687-92, 695-96 are invitations from Frau Scholtz-Klink to Rosenberg, or vice-versa, to speak at functions, with replies; frame 671 is Rosenberg's birthday greeting to Frau Scholtz-Klink on 9 February, 1939, and frame 670 is her acknowledgment; she sent him a Christmas card in the same year, which he acknowledged, frame 661.

source of patronage. For example, Rosenberg's secretary, Thilo von Trotha, wrote to her asking that his mother, who was an NSF official in Pomerania, be given the chance to speak with Frau Scholtz-Klink when she visited that area¹.

If Frau Scholtz-Klink was the showpiece of German women, there were nevertheless others who also achieved positions of influence and prestige, although always either within the women's organisations or as a female "adviser" on a committee that was otherwise entirely male. For example, Auguste Reber-Gruber, a married woman teacher who was born in 1892 and who joined the NSDAP in May 1932, became "adviser for girls' education" in the Nazi Teachers' League in 1934, and two years later was, in addition, appointed to the position of senior administrator in the Reich Ministry of Education². Again, there was Dora Hein, who was the same age as Dr. Reber-Gruber and who, like her, was a leading member of the NSF; she joined the Party as early as May 1925, remained unmarried, and, as a professional civil servant, became "expert on women's affairs" and leader of a section in the Reichsbund der Deutschen Beamten on 1 October, 1934³. Another Party veteran, Anne-Marie Koeppen, who was born in 1899, remained single and joined the NSDAP in June 1928, was a journalist who became editor of the Reichsnährstand's magazine for women and leader of a section in

1. Ibid., frame 723, letter from Thilo von Trotha to Gertrud Scholtz-Klink, 28 March, 1935.

2. BDC, Party Census of 1939 and a letter from Hess, 9 October, 1936.

3. Ibid., Party Census of 1939 and a statement by Dora Hein, 28 July, 1939.

Walter Darre's office from 1934 to 1937¹. Both she and Dora Hein were awarded the Party's Gold Badge², along with a select group of women on Frau Scholtz-Klink's staff on the sixth anniversary of the Machtübernahme in January 1939³. Gertrud Scholtz-Klink had already received the Gold Badge at the commemoration service for the "martyrs" of 1923, on 9 November, 1936⁴.

It was also possible for those who had joined the Party after 30 January, 1933, to achieve high office in the women's organisation. The outstanding example here is Dr. Ilse Eben-Servaes, who was born in 1894, was married, with one child, and who joined the NSDAP in April 1933. She went on to become a member of the Party leadership in February 1935, and leader of the section for women lawyers in the NSRB, the Nazi Lawyers' Association. Dr. Eben-Servaes had a successful legal practice before 1933, and her professional experience was a valuable asset to the women's organisation; in 1934, she became legal adviser on Frau Scholtz-Klink's staff, and on the first day of 1936 took up the position of leader of the section for law and arbitration there⁵. Like Frau Scholtz-Klink⁶, she was appointed a member of the Academy of German Law in October 1936⁷. Although

1. Ibid., Anne-Marie Koeppen's file, "Lebenslauf", 12 May, 1938.

2. Ibid., Party Census of 1939.

3. "Nachrichten aus der Reichsfrauenführung. Januar-März 1939", FK May 1939, inside of title page.

4. HA, Reel 13, folder 254, "Partei-Archiv", November 1936.

5. BDC, Ilse Eben-Servaes's file, answers to a questionnaire for the NSDAP leadership, 2 October, 1939.

6. HA, loc. cit.

7. BA, R61/168, letter from Ilse Eben-Servaes to Loyal, at the Academy of German Law, 12 December, 1938.

Else Paul was officially Frau Scholtz-Klink's deputy in the National Women's Leadership¹, she remained very much in the background, her functions being largely administrative, and Dr. Eben-Servaes in fact held a position among women in the Party second only to Gertrud Scholtz-Klink's, at least until 1942²; as such, she was similarly used as a showpiece of what women could achieve in the Third Reich.

The organisation which these women and others built up, both within the Party, with the NSF, and affiliated to it, with the DFW, had begun to take shape while the leadership struggle was going on. The NSF had, like other sections of the NSDAP, been geared to effecting the takeover of power; once this was accomplished, its role changed and it became the élite group which was - under the Party leadership - to order the affairs of German women. In this, it had benefited from the general process of Gleichschaltung, by which all women's groups of a political nature had disappeared with the parties with which they were associated, and organisations promoting aims which the Nazis opposed - particularly the pacifist and feminist ones - had been banned³. Of the remainder, the women's professional and vocational organisations were absorbed, along with their masculine counterparts, into the relevant Nazi organisation⁴, and those considered inoffensive were allowed - at least for a time - to continue in existence if they became corporate members of the monolithic association

1. BA, Slg.Sch., 230, "Stab des Hauptamtes NS-F und DFW", n.d.

2. BDC, Ilse Eben-Servaes's file, letter of 22 January, 1942.

3. See above, Chapter 1, pp. 31-37.

4. See above, Chapter 5, pp. 286-90.

which was run by the NSF and from September 1933 called Das Deutsche Frauenwerk¹.

Paula Siber had, in practice, been in charge of the day-to-day running of the DFW during its first four months, and her view of it was as the promoter of social, cultural and economic activity among women². Most of its function during her period of office was simply the co-ordination of agencies which already existed for encouraging an interest in German culture and for advising women and girls on matters of child-care and household management³. It is often assumed that the Nazis initiated schemes of this nature, with the purpose of encouraging German nationalism and forcing women to accept that their sphere of activity and interest was the home and family; certainly, these motives can justly be attributed to them, but, as usual, they could claim no originality in devising organisations to promote them. Before 1933 there were active groups of women in, for example, the National Union of German Housewives and the National Association of German Housewives' Organisations, in the Women's Group of the National Association of German Musicians and Music Teachers, in the body called German Women's Culture, and in organisations giving instruction in infant and child-care and general

1. BDC, AOPG, 2684/34, letter from Paula Siber to Bormann, 22 May, 1934.
2. BDC, Paula Siber's file, letter from Paula Siber to Hinkel at the Prussian Ministry of Education, 16 February, 1934.
3. Organisations which figured in reports in BF in the section "Aus unseren Vereinen und Verbänden" during the period October 1931 to May 1933 appear in BA, op. cit., "Liste dem DFW angeschlossenen Reichsspitzenverbände, April 1935"; the same applies to some of the groups mentioned in BA, Nachlass Katharina von Kardorff, no. 28, "Der XI. Frauencongress in Berlin, 17-22.6.1929: Ehrenbeirat der Verbände".

training for motherhood¹. The Nazis' aim was to nationalise existing activity, and to give it uniformity on the basis of Party ideology - once the chaos of 1933-34 had been resolved - within the structure of the DFW, whose policy was determined by the NSF².

The NSF continued to be essentially the collective body of women Party members that it had been from its inception, although during the 1930s modifications of its composition were made. Early in 1935, Ley altered Strasser's original order that "All women Party members are automatically members of the NS-Frauenschaft" to read "Only those women Party members who are prepared to be active participants in the NS-Frauenschaft automatically become members of it"³. There was clearly no room in the NSF for dead wood. This order was the beginning of attempts to control the size of the NSF, so that it would indeed retain its élitist character, after the rush to join the Party and its affiliates in and after 1933. The NSF thus followed the example set by the NSDAP itself: a firm restriction on entry to the Party had come into force on 1 May, 1933⁴. Doubtless impressed by this precedent, Gertrud Scholtz-Klink asked Hess in January 1936 that there be a moratorium on admission to the NSF as quickly as possible. Ley's approval was quickly obtained, and the order went out that "The NS-Frauenschaft has now reached a membership which is fully sufficient

1. BF, loc. cit.

FK, February 1939, loc. cit.

2. Reichsfrauenführung (ed.), NS-Frauenschaft, Berlin, 1937, p. 16.

3. BA, Slg.Sch., 230, "Information (6) Nr. 0.18/35", issued by Ley, 27 February, 1935, p. 2.

4. Broszat, op. cit., p. 253.

for the performance of its tasks...", and that, accordingly, admission to it was closed to all except members of the BdM, from 1 February, 1936¹. In fact, Hess decided that only girls in the BdM leadership should be admitted to the NSF, but to prevent disappointment among those girls in other ranks of the BdM who would have hoped to be admitted to the NSF in 1936, a compromise was reached by Gertrud Scholtz-Klink and Trude Bürkner, the national BdM leader, for 1936 only, so that almost all of the girls who would have been admitted under the previous regulations in fact became members of the NSF².

Three years later, Frau Scholtz-Klink issued new guidelines for membership, "since the NS-Frauenschaft should be consolidated more strongly than hitherto as an élite organisation". Thus, all women who held office in the DFW or any organisation affiliated to the NSDAP, such as the NSV, the Labour Front, the Nazi Teachers' League, would be considered for membership of the NSF after eighteen months' "faultless" tenure of that office. Members of the BdM leadership, office-holders and "active comrades" in the ANSt - the group of Nazi girl students - and leaders in the Women's Labour Service would also be accepted³. By this time, with Germany at war, it was felt to be particularly important that anyone in a position of leadership should be under close Party control; membership of the NSF facilitated this, especially since the NSF had been declared a

1. BA, op. cit., letter from Friedrichs, in Hess's office, to Ley, 17 January, 1936.

2. Ibid., notice from Trude Bürkner to the Reich Youth Leadership and the Gau BdM leaders, 17 October, 1936.

3. Ibid., "Anordnung nr. 2/39", 25 October, issued by Gertrud Scholtz-Klink, 1939.

member-organisation of the NSDAP itself in March 1935¹. Thus, the needs of war - with NSF members responsible for supervising women's war-work and for maintaining morale among the female population² - led once again to an expansion of the NSF's membership, beyond the two million reliable women who belonged to it in 1938³.

The main function of the NSF was "the cultural, spiritual and political education of German women"⁴. Thus, it was vital that its members be thoroughly trained in Nazi ideas about racial "science", militant nationalism, and enthusiasm for large families. To this end, a special seminar was begun in January 1935, to provide lectures and group discussion for NSF members. The topics were either "weltanschaulich" (ideological), or else about German history and culture, or about practical housekeeping. These were studied in an intensive two-week course, which also included sight-seeing tours of Berlin and visits to the city's museums as light relief⁵. The literature about the seminar explained that it was deliberate policy to lay strong emphasis on "political education" in the course, since most of the participants were, by occupation, primarily involved in work of a practical nature, and yet were now put in the position of providing spiritual leadership for the mass of

1. FK, loc. cit.

2. BA, NSD 3/5, "Aufgaben der NS-Frauenschaft", 16 July, 1940, p. 659.

3. Figure calculated from information in BA, Slg.Sch., 230, Reichsfrauenführung Jahresbericht 1938, pp. 11 and 14.

4. "NS-Frauenschaft und Deutsches Frauenwerk", Führerlexikon 1934/35, p. 93.

5. IfZ, MA 609, frames 56489-92, "Amt für wissenschaftlicher Arbeit", n.d.

German women¹. Certainly, of the 3,260 women who had attended the seminar by autumn 1939, most were involved in practical occupations, the best-represented being that of clerical worker². The NSF, then, relied overwhelmingly on part-time, voluntary officials; all of its 20,000 or more workers in the localities participated on this basis, while in the districts only 9% of the NSF's officials were full-time, salaried employees. All of the 32 Gau NSF leaders and most of their assistants in the Gau NSF offices - together making a proportion of 81% there - were professional Party workers³. As was often the case in the Third Reich, then, the Nazis depended on the enthusiasm and devotion of large numbers of their female adherents for the operation of their system and avoided spending more than a limited amount of money on salaries.

The NSF's task was, then, to give ideological leadership to the female population of Germany, and especially to ensure that the activities of the largest body of organised women, in the DFW, corresponded with the Nazi view of the nature and role of women. Thus, it was the task of the DFW to orientate its activities in such a way that women were constantly reminded that child-bearing was the greatest joy they could experience, and also it was a solemn duty to be performed for the benefit of the nation. In addition, a large part of the DFW's work was to lie in helping women to keep physically healthy for this function, and in teaching them how to bring up

1. BA, NS15/15, frame 56526, Else Petri, "Ziel und Aufgabe des Seminars", Seminar für die NS-Frauenschaft an der Hochschule für Politik, Winter 1939/40.

2. IfZ, op. cit., frames 56477-84, "Bericht über die bisherige Tätigkeit des Seminars...1935-39".

3. BA, Slg.Sch., 230, op. cit., pp. 5-6, and p. I.

healthy children. Looking after children meant two more things: German women would have to learn proficiency in cookery, sewing, washing and ironing clothes, and general household management; and as the first educators of children, passing on their own views and standards to the young, they would have to be thoroughly inculcated with Nazi ideology. Finally, as recreation, women had a "cultural" task, namely the promotion of interest in German literature, art and music, and the discouraging of foreign cultural influences.

Paula Siber had begun the work of co-ordinating courses in domestic science and child-care already run by the various confessional and housewives' organisations¹, but the leadership struggle had hindered this development. After her appointment in February 1934, Gertrud Scholtz-Klink moved quickly to rationalise this activity which was vital to the Party's purpose, and within two months she had drawn up regulations for a unified service, the Reichsmütterdienst (National Mothers' Service), which was to be operated throughout Germany by the DFW. Its tasks fell into two main categories, instruction for mothers and the provision of welfare for mothers. The courses of instruction were supervised in each Gau by a woman with a suitable professional qualification, while in the welfare activities there was close co-operation with the NSV. The groups which had formerly engaged in work of this kind were plainly told that if they wished to continue their activity they would have to work under the leadership of the DFW, or else be dissolved². This

1. BDC, AOPG, 2684/34, statements made by Paula Siber, 28 and 30 April, 1934.

2. "Das Deutsche Frauenwerk über die Eingliederung der Verbände", Die Frau, April 1934, pp. 506-07.

ultimatum was considered necessary because the purpose of the Reichsmütterdienst - which was inaugurated on Mother's Day in May 1934¹ - was

"not only to instruct women in domestic science within the context of national economic policy: the aim of the Reichsmütterdienst is political education /which is/ the development of a particular attitude"².

The courses were well publicised in the Party's women's magazines³, and meticulous records of attendance were kept in each Gau⁴. To try to accommodate employed women as well as housewives, the courses were offered in mornings, afternoons and evenings for three different groups in the cities, while in rural areas travelling instructors were employed⁵. The courses seem to have met a real demand; if 100,000 participants was a modest beginning in their first year⁶, the numbers soon rose sharply, so that in 1936 there were 452,000 participants in more than 22,000 courses⁷. This was even

1. FK, loc. cit.

2. Quoted from NS-Mädchenbildung in "Zur politischen Schulung im Reichsmütterdienst", Die Frau, November 1936, p. 108.

3. E.g., FK, May 1939, loc. cit.

"Die kameradschaftliche Volksmutter", NS-Frauenwarte, May 1936, pp. 774-75 and p. 778.

4. BA, op. cit., pp. 8 and 37.

5. BA, R2/12771, letter from the Deutscher Gemeindetag to Rust, 20 October, 1937.

IfZ, MA 388, frame 726440, "Die Gaubräuteschule des Deutschen Frauenwerkes Mütterdienst, Brüggen/Niederrhein", n.d. (?early 1939).

6. "Frau Scholtz-Klink über: Die Mitarbeit der deutschen Frau im neuen Staat - Der Sinn des Muttertages", VB, 8 May, 1935.

7. "Arbeit des Reichsmütterdienstes, 1934-37", Deutsches Frauenschaffen 1938, pp. 36-37.

before an element of compulsion was introduced for certain categories of women - for the fiancées of SS men from November 1936¹, and for the wives and fiancées of SA men in 1938². The wives of SS men were also strongly encouraged to take part in a course³. Altogether, in 1944 it was estimated that in ten years about five million women and girls had attended a Reichsmütterdienst course, at an average annual rate of half a million women in thirty thousand courses⁴. Large numbers of staff were required to operate a scheme of this size, and this created financial problems, although participants had to pay fees. The situation was such that Frau Scholtz-Klink felt the need to express regret at being unable to pay the various administrators and instructors at a better rate, and as compensation ensured that they had longer holidays than other vocational workers⁵. Meagre resources did not, however, lead to a slowing down of the activity, since the courses were felt to serve the interests of the Party's permanent preoccupation, the raising of the birth rate⁶.

As part of the continuing expansion, residential courses were

1. BA, loc. cit.

2. HA, Reel 13, folder 253: order by Brigadeführer Giesler of SA Gruppe Hochland, 1 October, 1937; order by Gruppenführer Günther of SA Gruppe Thüringen, n.d. (?October 1937).

Report in FZ, 9 February, 1938.

3. "'Die Hausfrau der Zukunft', Schulung aller SS-Bräute durch den Reichsmütterdienst", FZ, 2 December, 1936.

4. "Bevölkerungspolitik", Die Deutsche Sozialpolitik, July 1944, p. 63.

5. HA, op. cit., Reichsfrauenführung "Rundschreiben FW Nr. 48/37", n.d. (?June 1937).

6. Ibid., folder 254, Reichsfrauenführung "Rundschreiben FW Nr. 94/37", 14 October, 1937.

provided in 1937, and there were special "Brides' Schools" which were run by the DFW for the wives and fiancées of SS and SA men and members of the armed forces¹. In these, an inexperienced young woman was put in a situation where she had the model of a home to run for six weeks - a house which included children, to stress that the child was a natural, indeed an indispensable, part of a complete household. The cost of this venture was met by fees, which could be partly offset by a marriage loan, thus again encouraging procreation, since the loan could be substantially cancelled by the birth of children². But the interest initially shown in this project by the SS, and particularly by Himmler³, was short-lived: although the SS asked in April 1939 for reports to be made about the progress of its members' brides in the course⁴, the outbreak of war within five months and the hasty marriages it occasioned led Himmler to drop attendance at a course of instruction from his list of requirements for SS brides⁵.

While the Reichsmütterdienst was intended as an exercise in propaganda as well as a practical venture, the real work of "political education" was the responsibility of the section in the DFW called "Kultur-Erziehung-Schulung". By 1939 this included, in addition to

1. "Die Aufgaben der Bräuteschulen", FZ, 30 December, 1937.

2. IfZ, op. cit., frames 726440-41.

3. BA, loc. cit.

BA, Slg.Sch., 230, "Zusammenarbeit des Deutschen Frauenwerkes mit der SS zwecks Müttererschulung der SS-Bräute", order issued by Himmler, 22 April, 1937.

4. IfZ, op. cit., frames 726442-43, letter from SS-Pflegestelle 20 to the Gau NSF leadership, Düsseldorf, 24 April, 1939.

5. Ibid., MA 387, frame 6254, order issued by Himmler, 1 September, 1939.

the provision of courses of instruction on matters of race, heredity and German history, divisions for "academic work", girls' education, literature, art and music, handicrafts and physical training¹. This entire section was closely associated with the activities of the Labour Front's Kraft durch Freude (Strength through Joy) enterprise². By 1939, it was reported that almost every Gau had established an agency for instruction in ideological matters; while Halle-Merseburg, Mecklenburg and Schleswig-Holstein had yet to do this, there were two or more such agencies in Düsseldorf, Cologne-Aachen, South-Hanover-Brunswick and Württemberg-Hohenzollern³. The content of the instruction consisted mainly of explanations of Nazi policy, in terms both of long-term objectives and day-to-day measures, and justification of them in order to encourage co-operation from as much of the female population as possible⁴.

The task of ensuring that the DFW was kept under the leadership and control of the NSF was facilitated by the policy of Personalunion, the holding of positions in both by reliable women. At the top, Frau Scholtz-Klink had been appointed leader of both groups at the same time, to provide continuity at the national level; correspondingly, it had been policy from the founding of the DFW to continue this kind of arrangement in the Gaue, so that

1. "Organisationsplan der Reichsfrauenführung", Deutsches Frauenschaffen, 1939, p. 8.

2. BA, op. cit., Reichsfrauenführung Jahresbericht 1938, p. II.

3. Ibid., p. 9.

4. "Die Arbeit der NS-Frauenschaft und des Deutschen Frauenwerks im Jahre 1935", NS-Frauenwarte, March 1936, p. 613.

the woman responsible for the work of the DFW in the Party's largest administrative unit was normally the Gau NSF leader¹. In 1934, this degree of personal union was declared compulsory². But for the time being this was where the policy stopped; it was also decreed that no NSF official should preside over all the different groups of DFW activity in her area, because of the specialised nature of the work done in some of them³.

The DFW's structure and organisation were, however, felt by Hess and Ley to be unsatisfactory for the function the association was intended to perform, and after much discussion⁴, a new constitution was produced in April 1936 which described its aim as "the organisational unification of women prepared to collaborate in the Führer's work of construction, under the leadership of the NSF", and extended the policy of personal union. Now, the DFW was formally divided into the same geographical units as the NSF, and therefore as the NSDAP, and, as an innovation, the NSF leader in any area was designated the automatic choice for DFW leadership in the same area. This streamlining of the DFW, hitherto divided according to the interests of the constituent groups, was a natural result of its elevation to the status of an "affiliated organisation" of the Party, to which the principles of the Party itself applied, whereas formerly its connection with the Party had been indirect,

1. BDC, op. cit., letter from Paula Siber to Bormann, 22 May, 1934.

2. Führerlexikon, loc. cit.

3. Die Frau, April 1934, loc. cit.

4. BA, op. cit., letter from Sommer, in Hess's office, to Ley, 28 August, 1935.

Ibid., letter from Ley to Hess, 8 October, 1935.

through its association with the NSF¹. Thus, the Nazification of the women's organisation followed upon the nationalisation of its work in the early Gleichschaltung period; this further step involved a breach of the 1933 Concordat with the Vatican, as Stuckart pointed out to Hess², but for the Party it was an obvious step to take, to increase its control over the direction of women's affairs.

It was not only the DFW which had to be kept in line with NSF, and ultimately Party, policy; for there were other offices and organisations which dealt with matters of interest to and involving women. It was to facilitate co-operation, and even uniformity, among these that Frau Scholtz-Klink was given positions within the Labour Front and the NSBO, for example. Because she was thus expected and enabled to provide "unified leadership...for all areas of womanly work in the community"³, she built up a centralised bureau of officials around herself as National Women's Leader, which was formally accorded the title of Reichsfrauenführung (National Women's Leadership) in June 1936. This, "the only office responsible for all matters of concern to the German woman", developed close links with the other groups in which women were involved, but which were outside Frau Scholtz-Klink's direct authority, by means of agreements for co-operation, to avoid demarcation disputes and to try to prevent duplication of functions. Such arrangements were made, for

1. Ibid., "Satzung des Deutschen Frauenwerks", Der Führerorden, 11 April, 1936.

2. BA, R22/24, letter from Stuckart to Hess, 14 December, 1936.

3. "Nationalsozialistische Frauenarbeit", FK, April 1937, p. 9.

example, with the NS-Cultural Community in January 1935, with the ANSt at the same time, with the Nazi Teachers' League in June 1936, and in the following month with the section for "Mother and Child" in the NSV¹.

There were other groups, too, which were expected to co-operate with Frau Scholtz-Klink's office; prominent among these were the Red Cross and the NS-Schwesternschaft, the Party's own nursing corps, which was under the jurisdiction of the NSV². But Ley made it clear in January 1934 that no agency of the Party nor any State organisation was to try to establish its own women's groups which would, in effect, be rivals to the NSF or the DFW. Ley emphasised that these two were specifically intended to be monopoly organisations, for women Party members and for other female citizens respectively, to eliminate class or other divisions among German women - chiefly, obviously, to avoid the kind of diversity and even conflict which the Party considered so harmful to national harmony and uniformity. Ley pointed out that women might indeed be members of an occupational or professional group, but such a group would also have male members, and would thus not aspire to become a specifically women's interest group, taking a particular section of women out of the mainstream of female activity, which was to find its expression in the DFW³. It was this attitude which underlay the Party's insistence on making women's sections of professional organisations,

1. FK, February 1939, op. cit., pp. 3-4.

2. Schäfer, op. cit., p. 63.

3. BA, op. cit., "Rundschreiben nr. 1/34", 5 January, 1934, issued by Ley.

for example, corporate members of the DFW, and, in the later 1930s, at least, involving their members as much as possible in the work of the DFW.

Ley's edict did not prevent confusion occurring from time to time thereafter. For example, Frau Scholtz-Klink found it necessary to resolve the "considerable lack of clarity about the relationship of the housewife to the DFW and the Labour Front", in summer 1936. She had agreed with Hess and Ley that all employed housewives belonged, by virtue of their being employees, to the DAF, while all housewives who were not employed outside the home belonged - insofar as they wished to be organised, she was careful to add - to the NSF or the DFW, whichever was appropriate. She felt obliged to clarify this point because a group within the DAF, the National Association of Domestic Workers, had been trying to enlist full-time housewives as members. Now, in July 1936, Frau Scholtz-Klink banned such activity, and announced that where the interests of housewives and domestic employees coincided, provision would be made for joint meetings to take place at the district level, under the supervision of the NSF¹, to ensure that her orders were observed.

The National Women's Leadership was not itself an organisation but rather the central administrative agency in which the various branches of women's activity were represented by "experts".

Predictably, Ilse Eben-Servaes became the authority on legal matters, while Auguste Reber-Gruber was the adviser on education. There were also experts on foreign affairs, nursing, the Labour Service, "Mother

1. Ibid., NSF information leaflet, "Zugehörigkeit der Hausfrauen zum DFW bzw. zur DAF", signed by Gertrud Scholtz-Klink, July, 1936.

and Child", and the radio, for propaganda¹. These officials, along with other general assistants, were appointed to enable Frau Scholtz-Klink to discharge her many duties in a vast number of organisations, in a wide variety of fields. The office evolved during the 1930s, but although modifications were made after 1936 it was by then that it had developed its essential form. Its nine sections were divided into two groups, with those responsible for culture and education, national and domestic economy, foreign activity, social assistance, and training for motherhood coming into being in the years 1934-36, to co-ordinate the DFW's activity in the same areas. The other four sections dealt with purely organisational matters, including finance, personnel, information collation, and press and propaganda, which included radio, films and exhibitions².

The propaganda network of the National Women's Leadership was modelled on the propaganda machine of the NSDAP. Within its jurisdiction came the publications of both the NSF and the DFW, including the NS-Frauenwarte, the NSF's official magazine, which had the highest circulation of any Party periodical³. In addition, there were pamphlets, newsletters, and films and radio broadcasts directed specifically at women⁴. The radio programmes consisted chiefly of cookery hints, including the skilful use of cheaper foodstuffs, and "cultural" items concerned with German literature and music; in keeping with the Party's view of women as the mothers of the nation, there was

1. Ibid., Reichsfrauenführung Jahresbericht 1938, "Stab des Hauptamtes NS-Frauenschaft und Deutsches Frauenwerk", n.d., ?1935.

2. FK, April 1937, loc. cit.

3. BA, R61/172, letter to the Academy of German Law, 29 January, 1936.

4. Deutsches Frauenschaffen, loc. cit.

also a regular "Listen with Mother" feature for small children¹. Propaganda included the staging of exhibitions, at both the national and local level; these were generally on the theme of "Woman and Nation", the title of a national exhibition held in May-June 1935, or "The Contribution of Women in the Community", the title of the women's exhibition held during the 1937 Party Congress². The content of these tended to be tableaux depicting women's role, the products of the DFW's sewing bees and illustrated records of the work of NSF and DFW women at home and abroad. In 1937 there were altogether 3,000 such exhibitions, visited by a million and a half people, while in 1938 there were almost 3,600 exhibitions - this time, however, visited by the smaller number of 1.1 million people³. In addition, there were fêtes, sales of work and meetings, which attracted a reasonable attendance: in 1937, almost 1.4 million women attended the 16,330 events of this nature, while in 1938 both these figures were nearly doubled⁴.

If German women took an interest in these events and were prepared to participate in them to some extent, it seems clear that this was an indication more of their liking for social gatherings than of their enthusiastic support for National Socialism. The nationalisation of social life gave everyone - who was racially and politically acceptable to the Nazis - the chance to participate,

1. HA, op. cit., "Der Frauenfunk der Woche, 21.3 - 27.3.1937", pp. 1-6.

2. FK, February 1939, op. cit., pp. 3 and 5.

3. BA, Slg.Sch., 230, op. cit., p. 29.

4. Ibid., p. 28.

and excluded no-one. It was, of course, deliberate Party policy to try to involve everyone, and thus to control them; there were, however, special problems to be faced in organising women for this purpose. The full-time housewife - nominally, at least, the Nazi ideal as far as women were concerned - was potentially the least easy member of the community to organise, and so special propaganda had to be directed at her, to encourage her to believe that it was her duty to be "politically aware" of her role in the life of the community, and to be involved in activities outside the home, to make contact with her female fellow-citizens¹. For many women who felt isolated as housebound wives, and who had possibly developed an inferiority complex in the relatively feminist atmosphere of the 1920s, the vitality and sense of direction provided by the Nazi women's organisation was a new lease of life².

The organisational activity could, it transpired, be overdone. In December 1935, the Party's agent in Bad Kreuznach, near Mainz, reported that the recruiting drives, cultural evenings, assemblies and Christmas festivities conducted by the Party and its affiliates had been so intensive and persistent that the local population was beginning to sigh, "We're being organised to death!" The net results of this energetic activity were, accordingly, disappointing: the only new recruits won for the women's organisations had been from among the

1. Lore Bauer, "Die 'politische' Frau", VB, 6 September, 1935.

"Erziehung zur politischen Verantwortung: Die Frau, die Erzieherin der Jugend, muss teilnehmen an der Entwicklung des staatlichen Lebens", VB, 27 September, 1935.

2. This, at any rate, was what the Nazis claimed to have achieved, and there was clearly some truth in it. This was confirmed by a former minor official of the NSF in Munich, in conversation; she seemed sufficiently uninhibited and free from a guilt complex to be credible.

wives of Party members and civil servants¹. Clearly, resistance to involvement could be the result of saturation by propaganda in favour of it. But resistance could also be the result of deliberate activity by the few agencies outside the NSDAP and its groups which continued to exist; with most sources of actual and potential opposition quickly eliminated in 1933, the largest ones remaining thereafter were the Churches. Both the Evangelical and the Roman Catholic Churches offered resistance to the monopolising of organisational activity by the Nazis, since it was bound to encroach on their own territory. The degree of obstructiveness was at times such that the Party's local representative had to report, as in the case of Neuwied, near Koblenz, in 1935, that

"it is not possible to form an NSF group in parish D. The lack of success is attributed to the women's association, which is under the influence and leadership of the pastor's wife"².

As late as February 1938, it was reported from a district in the Trier area that it had still not been possible to form an NSF group because of the opposition of the priest³.

Much has been made of the blind and often hysterical enthusiasm

1. Heyen, op. cit., "Aus dem Lagebericht des Landrates von Bad Kreuznach über den Monat Dezember 1935", no. 164, pp. 291-92.
2. Ibid., "Aus dem Lagebericht des Landrats von Neuwied über den Monat 12.1935", no. 89, p. 179.
3. Ibid., "Politische Beurteilungen der einzelnen Ortsgruppen des Kreises Trier-Land-West, vom 1 Februar 1938", no. 200, p. 341.

for Hitler and the Nazis manifested by some women¹. But it ought also to be stressed that in the day-to-day opposition and passive resistance offered by the Churches in the Third Reich, women were often in the forefront². If it can be argued from this that women were opposing one kind of superstition and domination because of their attachment to another, this does not detract from the fact that there was considerable resistance to Nazi organising drives among women at the local, often parochial, level.

This was doubtless a reason for the slow rate at which DFW membership grew, in spite of the effort expended on publicising its activities and the initial compulsion exerted on existing groups to take out corporate membership. According to the Party's statistical records, there were in 1935 eighty-seven groups in the DFW, with a total membership of 2.7 million³. But since the National Women's

1. L. P. Lochner (ed.), The Goebbels Diaries 1942/43, London, 1949, entry for 12 September, 1943, p. 358.

Douglas L. Kelley, Twenty-Two Cells in Nuremberg, London, 1947, p. 60.

Heinrich Fraenkel, German People versus Hitler, London, 1940, pp. 222 and 227.

W. L. Shirer, Berlin Diary 1934-41, London, 1941, entries for 4 September, 1934, pp. 22-23, and 4-5 September (3 am), 1940, p. 389.

2. Heyen, op. cit., "Aus dem Lagebericht des Landrates von Bad Kreuznach über den Monat Januar 1936", no. 90, p. 180.

Ibid., from answers to a questionnaire in Koblenz, August 1938, no. 93, p. 185.

BA, Slg.Sch., 243/II, vol. 2, "Demonstration kath. Frauen in Beulich", 2 May, 1939. I am most grateful to Dr. J. S. Conway of the University of British Columbia for generously sending me a copy of this document.

3. NSDAP Partei-Statistik, 1935, vol. III, p. 58.

Leadership reported that the figure for DFW membership in December 1937 was only about 670,000¹, it seems likely that the 1935 figure included NSF members, probably some two million of them. It is reasonable to suppose, however, that there was a decline in DFW membership between 1935 and 1937, since a number of the groups which had become corporate members in 1933 and 1934 were dissolved in 1935 and 1936². If their members wished to maintain their connection with the DFW - and many probably did not, once their own organisation was dissolved - they would have had to apply for individual membership. But at last in 1938 there was a significant rise in DFW numbers, with the total for the end of that year rising above 1.1 million in Germany itself, and, in addition, there were over 400,000 members in Austria nine months after the Anschluss³. The total membership claimed at the end of 1940 for the Greater German Reich was around six million for the NSF and DFW together⁴, an increase of about two million over the comparable total for December 1938⁵.

Frau Scholtz-Klink and her staff were well aware that the conflict between the generations had been a major problem for the feminist organisations in the later 1920s, and were determined that no

1. BA, Slg.Sch., 230, op. cit., p. 11.

2. This concerned chiefly the former conservative or nationalist organisations. See above, Chapter 1, p. 34.

3. BA, loc. cit.

4. IfZ, MA 253, frame 653, "Der Einsatz der NSF/DFW im Kriegsjahr 1940".

5. BA, loc. cit.

such difficulties should upset the harmony of the Nazi women's organisation. Clearly, twenty-one-year-old girls coming straight from the BdM into the NSF, and young women joining the DFW, would have to be provided with interesting activities; otherwise, they might feel that they were being submerged in a housewives' club run by middle-aged matrons, and subside into apathy or disaffection. The tactic adopted to try to avoid this, and to encourage new recruits for the DFW and groom potential NSF members and leaders, was the creation of "youth groups" within both the NSF and the DFW, in 1936, for the eighteen to thirty age-group. The official regulations for the youth groups stated that their purpose was primarily to bring young women together and to provide the opportunity for them to do the things people of their age liked to do; these were deemed to include singing and dancing, with a high content of physical exercise, including hill-walking. But there were special "education" - political indoctrination - courses as well, which were vital to the Nazi scheme given that young women had, in the Party's view, constantly to be reminded that their destiny and their duty lay in marrying and starting a family - or adding to a family they might already have. To emphasise this, the girls were also expected to take an active part in the DFW's sectional work, particularly in the realm of domestic management and child-care¹.

In order to keep young women in this important age-group as much under Party surveillance as possible, a vast array of activities was designated as desirable, including training with the Red Cross

1. BA, op. cit., "Anordnung Nr. 2/37", issued by Gertrud Scholtz-Klink, 12 February, 1937.

and voluntary assistance in first-aid and welfare work, training in air-raid protection, and, for the more energetic, reaching a standard of proficiency in physical pursuits to win the women's National Sport Badge¹. But in spite of the barrage of propaganda directed at attracting young women to the youth groups, recruitment here - as to the DFW generally - was disappointing. Perhaps the Nazis had, after all, misjudged the disposition and desires of young women; or perhaps they had simply overestimated the extent to which they could, in a one-party State, with a monopoly of propaganda, mould the disposition and desires of groups of Germans, according to the role they were assigned in Nazi plans. At any rate, by the beginning of 1939 the youth groups had a modest membership of 168,533, while, it was observed, there were nearly 400,000 women between eighteen and thirty in the NSF alone, with a considerable number in the DFW in addition. It was, however, felt to be encouraging that the year 1938 had seen an increase of 48% in the membership², and there was to be a further rise to 292,000 by September 1939, and the achievement of a membership of over 400,000 in August 1942. But these last figures apply to the Greater German Reich³, and are therefore not directly comparable with the 1938 figures, which apply to Germany within its 1937 borders.

There remained one group of Germans, other than pre-school-age children, for whom organised activity had to be provided, if the

1. Dorothea Thimme, "Die Jugendgruppen des Deutschen Frauenwerkes bekennen sich zur Leistung", FK, September 1938, p. 5.

2. BA, op. cit., Reichsfrauenführung Jahresbericht 1938, pp. 19-20.

3. BA, NSD 3/5, "Jugendgruppen der NS-Frauenschaft/Deutsches Frauenwerk", 13 October, 1942, p. 660.

totalitarian State was to try to control all its citizens: this was the six-to-ten-year-old group, which was too young to join the junior branches of the Hitler Youth, but nevertheless at a highly impressionable age. It was therefore made the task of the NSF to create "children's groups", which by early 1938 catered for 350,000 children, in almost 9,500 groups; attendance increased during 1938, so that at the end of the year the figures were, respectively, over 400,000 and 11,000¹. The stated aim of these groups was that the entire German youth should grow up in a community from early childhood, to inculcate in them the ideals of comradeship and mutual consideration, and to "strengthen their love for Führer and nation". But indoctrination was not the only purpose of the groups, in the later 1930s; at a time when women were increasingly being encouraged to enter employment outside the home even before the outbreak of war, and more urgently after it, it was imperative that mothers of young children should have facilities provided for the care of their children while they worked. The children's groups, then, were to remedy the insufficiency of crèches, which was one of the many complaints made by working women in the early days of the war about conditions². To try to expedite this, Ley ordered that accommodation at the disposal of the Labour Front be given over to the children's groups³.

While the female population generally was being exhorted to serve the Fatherland in war-time, increased demands were made on the

1. BA, Slg.Sch., 230, op. cit., p. 25.

2. IfZ, MA 441/1, frames 2-750490-91, MadR, 18 December, 1939.

3. BA, op. cit., "Anordnung 1/40", issued by Ley, 16 January, 1940.

women's organisation, too. Members of the NSF and the DFW were called upon to undertake voluntary work - which had the supreme virtue for the Government of costing little or nothing in terms of remuneration - in agriculture, or first-aid, or factory work, if they were unable to engage full-time in productive work. Certainly, there were areas where piecemeal, amateur activity was extremely suitable, for example in the staffing of crèches, the undertaking of clothes repairs and the provision of auxiliary nursing assistance for civilians; these tasks, and others, were performed by members of the DFW from the start of the war. But the NSF's own statistics revealed how very sporadic and sparse the voluntary activity was: in 1940, more than three-and-a-half million women in the NSF and the DFW worked for over 200 million hours without pay, that is at the average rate of about an hour a week, which was only a gesture when the country was at war. The NSF, of course, had additional duties, particularly in terms of propaganda activity, to maintain the "inner front" of ideological conformity among the women of the nation at a time when solidarity was even more necessary than ever¹. But it is clear that the Government tried to make good the shortages of labour, which its own failure to coerce women into war-work perpetuated, by relying on voluntary, part-time women workers who turned out to be as reluctant to expend more than a very minimal amount of time and energy outside their own routine, in spite of the exhortations and the pleas, as to take up full-time, paid employment in vital war industry.

Again and again, concrete information belies the proud boasts made by Frau Scholtz-Klink, her staff and her propaganda network

1. IfZ, MA 253, frames 649-54, "Der Einsatz der NSF/DFW im Kriegsjahr 1940".

that the Nazi-directed activity of women in the Third Reich was energetic, all-embracing and performed with enthusiasm by vast numbers of German women. There was certainly an impression of industry and large-scale participation, chiefly because the Party's press generally, and the women's press in particular, gave comprehensive coverage of events of even the most minor significance, exaggerating their scope and importance. In this context, the example of press circulation is itself instructive: the National Women's Leadership published its own newsletter, the official magazines of both the NSF and the DFW, and two other magazines designed to interest women, Mutter und Volk (Mother and Nation) and Deutsche Hauswirtschaft (German Housekeeping). In 1938, when there were over two million NSF members, the NS-Frauenwarte, the official magazine of the NSF, had a circulation of 1.2 million; if this was perhaps respectable, it nevertheless meant that only just over half of the Party's élite organisation of women subscribed to their own magazine, which hardly indicated real enthusiasm. Also in 1938, when the DFW's membership was, at its highest point, 1.1 million, a mere 23,000 women took the DFW's magazine, Frauenkultur im Deutschen Frauenwerk; and only 76,000 subscribed to the Nachrichtendienst, the Leadership's newsletter. The other two magazines together attracted about 300,000 readers between them, on a roughly half-and-half basis¹. Thus the success of Frau Scholtz-Klink's office in promoting its publications - and two of its three official ones, particularly - was limited, not to say poor; the net result was that

1. BA, Slg. Sch., 230, Reichsfrauenführung Jahresbericht 1938, p. 28.

the barrage of propaganda did not reach even all the women who had chosen to join an organisation, let alone the vast majority who had not.

If it is true that the housewife in any community is the hardest member of it to organise, this is not a particularly alarming situation in a liberal democratic society or even an old-fashioned conservative autocratic regime. But in a modern dictatorship which aspires to be totalitarian it must be a source of concern, since it means that a whole category of citizens cannot be controlled and, of even greater importance, this is the category which has control over the youth of the nation in its earliest years. Their obsession with uniformity and control, and their deep concern for the upbringing of future generations of Germans, made the Nazis try continuously, by flattery and by appeals, to attract women to organisations under the supervision of the Party. They had some success with employed women, who at least had to pay lip-service to the Nazi system to feel secure in a job, but these tended to join specialist groups for both sexes rather than a group composed exclusively of women. For example, the records kept about women civil servants show that members of a group employed in the Chancellery itself chose, in addition to their occupational group, the RDB, the National Air-Raid Protection Society, the NSV and the Colonial Society regularly, but the DFW seldom¹. It can hardly be surprising that, in a society where such stress was laid on the comradeship of men and women and the necessity of raising the birth rate, the women gravitated

1. BA, R43II/1091c, information from personal records kept in the Reich Chancellery about its employees, compiled between March and May 1939.

- as most women normally do - into mixed rather than segregated groups, thus confounding the other, at times contradictory, Nazi preoccupation that the functions of the two sexes should, on the whole, be kept separate.

The NSF was indeed a well-organised, élite, leadership group, as had been intended, "to educate in the spirit of community life through the union of women from all sections of the population in the service of the National Socialist idea"¹. But its "followers" remained dispersed, and to a large extent apathetic. It was loudly boasted that the DFW was successfully cutting across the barriers of class and occupation, with "the housewife and the employed woman, the domestic servant and the professional woman, the unskilled woman worker and the artist" all finding common ground in the activities of the Frauenwerk². But the herding of as many women as could be persuaded into a segregated organisation was an essentially artificial manoeuvre, for, as Ley himself observed,

"The DFW cannot, in my opinion, be termed a 'National Socialist community'.... The name 'community' can only be applied where there is a gathering of people from all sections of the nation. The organisation of members of one sex can therefore not be termed a community"³.

Even the streamlining of the DFW, and its closer association with the Party, from 1936 could not disguise the fact that it was still basically the product of the nationalisation of groups which had existed before 1933. Certainly, much of the activity, especially in terms of child-care, homecraft and first-aid, was set on a more

1. Reichsfrauenführung, op. cit., p. 14.

2. Ibid., p. 20.

3. BA, Slg.Sch., 230, letter from Ley to Hess, 8 October, 1935.

systematic footing, and those organisations which were dissolved after the initial purge were either not relevant to the sectional work of the DFW or else rationalised into larger groupings. Thus, the membership of the DFW continued largely to consist of those women who had previously chosen to join a group for specifically women's interests, since coercion was not used. Coercion would hardly have been practicable, given that it would have been difficult to impose sanctions on full-time housewives, who had no outside job to be dismissed from, and who were in the delicate position of bringing up the nation's children. This latter function meant that there was a real need to make these women well-disposed towards the regime, so that threats were out of the question. To this extent, perhaps, the Nazis succeeded; if there was little positive enthusiasm for Party activities there was no organised opposition either. The resistance that manifested itself was resistance to involvement; as long as the Nazis were prepared to leave the mass of women unorganised, German women gave at least passive acquiescence to the regime. This was, of course, of incalculable value, but it nevertheless was a poor return for the incessant propaganda directed at mobilising positive support for the regime on the part of women. To the extent that the Nazis tried hard to organise women and to prevent the relative isolation of the full-time housewife, they must be deemed to have failed.

CONCLUSION

The study of even the few selected aspects of women's position in German society in the 1930s which have figured in this work permits the making of observations, and the drawing of tentative conclusions, in three broad areas. Firstly, and most obviously, the general position of women at the end of the decade, compared with that in 1930, must be evaluated. Then there are remarks of a more general kind that can be made in the German context, particularly with regard to the Nazi regime, its policies, and its aspirations to totalitarian control of Germany. And finally more should be said about the position of women in other countries, since there is only limited profit in looking at the situation in one country in a vacuum. But, obviously, to attempt to consider other countries in a comprehensive way would unreasonably extend a work that is already lengthy, and so it is possible here to look only at a few aspects of women's position in some European countries, and to look at them briefly.

A. The German Scene

In the general German context, six aspects stand out most clearly, and provide an interesting insight into the politics and problems of the later Weimar period and into the operation of the Nazi regime. In the first place, it appears that the inability of the Reich governments from 1930-33 to take effective action in the economic crisis was in part a product of the democratic system, eroded as it became in these years. In this system, precarious coalition governments of often basically incompatible elements followed one another in rapid succession; decisions were arrived at

only slowly - and sometimes never - at a time when speed was essential; and the power of the Reich government was in any case limited as a result of the substantial autonomy still jealously guarded by the Länder. The stagnation, at times to the extent of paralysis, to which these features contributed caused frustration among the supporters of the Republic and provided ready ammunition for the growing body of opposition to it, on both right and left. In a sense, this created a vicious circle, since governments could not act without further antagonising either the right or the left. And while the last governments of the Republic would hardly have favoured the kind of action that would have met strong opposition on the right, they also feared to generate support for the left by deliberately outraging it. Most of the time, then, inaction seemed the least harmful course.

But if governments did not give clear evidence of energetic attempts to solve Germany's problems in the late 1920s, particularly in the depression, they nevertheless were busy discussing possible plans, appointing committees and consulting experts. The direction in which their investigations took them was, it is clear, often very similar to that subsequently followed - generally with vigour, ruthlessness and effectiveness - by Hitler's Government. The attempt to reduce student numbers in the early 1930s and to pursue a positive population policy are two examples of this. If the policies eventually implemented by the Nazis were often a distortion of those provisionally envisaged by the Brüning Government, particularly, there was nevertheless a strong degree of continuity in the policies considered and followed in the years 1930 to 1935/36. This is hardly remarkable, since any government of Germany at this time, even one with

a disproportionate number of prejudices and a heavy weight of ideological lumber, was bound to have as its first priority the alleviating of the problems of the economic crisis. Given the Nazis' basic lack of originality, it was even more natural that they should borrow - even if to intensify and distort - skeleton plans already conceived and tentative schemes still at the experimental stage. Thus, they based a comprehensive public works scheme on the piecemeal expedients introduced under the Papen and Schleicher Governments, and extended and redirected the Labour Service, begun on an official basis under Brüning when already a concept that had been current in Germany for over thirty years.

Certainly, the Nazis introduced new measures in their early years of power; but the real change in the direction of their policies came in the mid-1930s, once the unemployment problem was under control, and when they had had time to design their medium-term plans and were able to begin to implement them within the framework of their long-term objectives. The reform of senior schooling, begun in 1936 and formalised at the beginning of 1938, is an obvious example here. But the fundamental point is that the Nazis were indeed - as they claimed - planning for the long term, for the "thousand-year Reich"; this is why apparent departures from basic principles during the 1930s, and particularly from the outbreak of war in 1939, are far less significant than has been assumed. Critics of the Nazis both at the time and since have delighted in pointing out inconsistencies and the apparent ease with which points of principle were jettisoned. Such commentators overlook the time-scale to which the Nazis were working, and their list of priorities. Better, they felt, to sacrifice an ideal for a short time in the immediate future, if thereby the long-term future of the Reich

would be secured: this is why the Nazis not only tolerated, but even energetically encouraged, the bringing of women into work once publicly designated "unsuitable" for them, when the needs of war seemed to demand it. Once the war was over and Germany's supremacy assured, women would for ever be relieved of the need to work in heavy industry and other potentially "biologically" damaging occupations.

This, however, immediately raises another point: the regime in fact failed to persuade women to respond adequately to its appeal for their co-operation in the war-effort, and, furthermore, failed to compel them to comply. This was not because the Nazis had abandoned their immediate aim of making Germany supreme, but can be attributed to two other factors. In the first place, in the early years of the war, at least up to the point where German forces failed to take Moscow in November 1941, and conceivably even later, it was still generally believed in Germany and by the Government that a German victory was assured and, more, was imminent. There seemed little point in forcing women into work against their will if in the near future their contribution would not in fact be required. More interestingly, perhaps, in the upper échelons of the Party, at its headquarters in Munich, far from the centre of government and remote from military and economic planning, the ideologues around Hess and Bormann failed to realise that their insistence on upholding the traditional Party view that woman's place was in the home with her family, and certainly not in heavy industry, was incompatible with their real priority, that Germany should establish herself in a position of European, even world, hegemony, by force of arms if necessary. This naïvety was a source of continuing irritation and frustration to the men who had to make the system work,

and who could see that aims of this kind were indeed - if temporarily - in conflict.

Thus, a man like Wilhelm Frick, a prominent member of the NSDAP before 1933, found himself, as Reich Minister of the Interior, in the first place defending the prerogatives of the State against the encroachments of the Party, and then having to counter objections to policy made on grounds of Party ideology with the plea of expediency. On the whole, given the weight of influence against him, he tended to fail, whether in trying to prevent the Party's monopolisation of women's organisational activity or in trying to oppose or circumvent the Party's demand that women be restricted to the areas assigned to them by the Party - which did not include the higher civil service, for example. Frick's problem was that Hitler never forgot that he was the Party's leader as well as Germany's ruler, and his few arbitrary pronouncements on women's affairs - on the admission of women to legal practice, for example - reflected the primacy of ideological considerations in his mind, even once the war and its demands suggested that these ought to be put into cold storage for a time. In the constant tension - or, as Schoenbaum says, "the anarchic relations"¹ - between Party and State in the Third Reich, Hitler's authority as leader of both, and his increasing irrationality and sentimental commitment to the NSDAP, its officers and its theories, all ensured that in most disputed areas the Party won the day - disastrously for the "thousand-year Reich", as it ironically transpired.

Two other points of general interest remain. Firstly, there is the at times almost comic insistence of the Nazis on voluntary effort and the saving of Government money by encouraging private enterprise in

1. Schoenbaum, op. cit., p. 294.

in the furthering of the Government's aims. In the name of a spurious - but, to many, convincing - "socialism" the Nazis wrung money out of German citizens for the Winter Aid scheme to help the poor, rather than release Reich funds for this purpose; the encouragement given to students to work voluntarily and without remuneration to afford fellow-citizens extra paid holidays was couched in the same terms, and served much the same purpose. If employers benefited to the extent that they did not have to provide the money for the extra holidays, the Government had nevertheless achieved a propaganda victory without itself putting up the money or antagonising employers by asking them to do so. Private industry as well as the individual was, in any case, expected to play its part in this alleged demonstration of national solidarity. Whether or not the Government had previously brought pressure to bear on the Reemstma cigarette company to induce it to supplement the marriage loan for its female employees out of its own funds¹, this example was widely publicised as a model for other firms to emulate.

The reluctance of the Government to spend money on social projects was doubtless in part the result of its desire to devote as much of its resources as possible to rearmament. No doubt there was also genuine enthusiasm within the Party for the ideological aspects of money for community purposes being raised within the community, without overt Government direction. It is also possible, however, that the fiscal orthodoxy of Krosigk and his advisers at the Ministry of Finance played a part. Certainly, Krosigk was alarmed when large-scale projects necessitated substantial Government expenditure, as he demonstrated when the Labour Service was greatly expanded in the later

1. See above, Chapter 3, pp. 140-41.

1930s¹. On a smaller scale, the Ministry of Finance felt less than enthusiasm for the SS's scheme to pay State aid to unmarried mothers². But the overall picture which emerges from the visible penny-pinching in social projects and the encouragement given to private initiatives and voluntary efforts seems somewhat paradoxical in the light of the Nazis' passion for imposing uniformity and nationalising as much of the German people's activity as possible.

Finally, the failure to achieve this uniformity, to impose total control, and to involve everyone in the life of the Nazi state, reveals that the Nazis had not created a fully totalitarian regime, whatever Robert Ley, for one, might claim³. They could not even stamp out coeducation or contraception, although they had anathematised both. Their failure was partly due to their continuing dependence on the co-operation of the German people, and their consequent reluctance to antagonise those who were "politically reliable", "racially desirable", and who were broadly content under Nazi rule as long as it made few demands on them. Women, particularly, had to be treated carefully: not only were they in a unique position of influence over the nation's youth, but, in addition, the Nazis no doubt remembered the threat of a "Gebärstreik" (strike against child-bearing) which had been made before the Great War, when working-class women were urged not to provide cannon-fodder for a regime which did not provide adequate sustenance for their children. Thus, persuasion rather than coercion,

1. See above, Chapter 3, p. 168.

2. See above, Chapter 2, pp. 109-10.

3. Schoenbaum, op. cit., p. 113, quotes Ley as saying: "There are no more private citizens. The time when anybody could do or not do what he pleased is past".

incentives rather than threats, and withdrawal with a good grace when opposition from the ordinary population seemed formidable, were the tactics to which Hitler's Government was restricted. The limitations thus imposed on Government action left a greater degree of freedom in the Third Reich than is apparent at first sight, and than has generally been supposed, and ensured that Nazi control of Germany was rather less than complete.

B. International Comparisons

On the whole, it appears that women in Germany in the 1930s - even in the Third Reich - were neither better nor worse off than women in other countries in terms of status and opportunities. In the Weimar years, the impression is that women were in a particularly fortunate position: for one thing, Germany had a far higher proportion of women legislators than most other countries. In 1926, when there were three women in the United States' Congress and six women in the Austrian parliament, there were thirty-two female Reichstag deputies. Again, in 1929, women constituted 1.1% of the membership of the House of Representatives, 2.1% of the House of Commons, and 6.7% of the Reichstag¹. Still in early 1933, there were fifteen women Members of Parliament in Britain and thirty-five women deputies in the Reichstag². But, as the feminists were well aware, membership of the legislative body alone could not guarantee progress towards equality for women. Much is made of how women lost their

1. Lowie, op. cit., p. 209.

2. "Women MPs", The Women's Who's Who, 1933.

Report in BF, January, 1933, p. 5.

representation in the Reichstag under the Nazis, once Germany became a one-party State; but it ought also to be remembered that in two of Germany's neighbours, France and Switzerland, women did not even have the vote in the 1920s and 1930s.

Clearly, it is felt to be less reprehensible not to introduce a reform than to reverse one that has taken place. Much of the time the Nazis are - generally rightly - criticised for revoking progressive measures, regardless of how effective they had been, and putting German women once again in a position similar to that obtaining in countries where reforms had not been effected. Perhaps the outstanding example of this is the law of 30 June, 1933, which permitted the dismissal of married women from the civil service and departure from the principle of equal pay for men and women in civil service positions¹. But in Britain, for example, women had been, and were still being, discriminated against in these areas: it has already been observed that British women had to wait until the mid-1950s before equal pay in the civil service was introduced², while married women were - other than exceptionally - banned from the teaching profession until after the Butler Act of 1944³. The implication, then, is that Germany of the Weimar Republic was in the vanguard of those countries which accepted a more equitable position for women in public and professional life.

But the problem in Germany in the 1920s, as the feminists never tired of complaining, was that the Weimar Constitution, which affirmed

1. See above, Chapter 5, pp. 281-82.

2. Ibid., p. 255.

3. H. C. Dent, The Education Act, 1944, London, 1964, p. 35.

equality of the sexes in education, in civil service appointments, and in terms of remuneration in the professions, was not the law of the land; it was possible at times to ignore its provisions, or at least to try to circumvent them, as Bavaria and Württemberg did in the case of married women teachers in the 1920s¹. Where the intentions of the Constitution were observed, progress in winning a more equitable position for women was slow; but those who imagined that it could be otherwise were surely naive. In the Soviet Union, too, where the Constitutions of 1918 and 1936 declared equality of rights between the sexes, men continued to hold a near-monopoly of the senior administrative positions, although women did increase their representation significantly in administrative and professional positions which carried less authority and responsibility². Indeed, women quickly came to dominate - numerically, if not in terms of authority - the medical profession; but it is suggested that this was because doctors were poorly paid in the Soviet Union³.

Certainly, if there was no distinction between the sexes as regards professional opportunities in some other countries - for example, Czechoslovakia, Lithuania, and Iceland, as well as the Soviet Union - in two of Germany's western neighbours, France and Belgium, the professions were not universally open to women; in addition, in other countries, including Italy, Bulgaria, Greece, Norway (until 1938) and the Netherlands^{la}, there remained restrictions on women's eligibility

1. See above, Chapter 5, p. 262.

2. M. Fainsod, How Russia is Ruled, London, 1963, p. 377.

3. Maurice Larkin, Gathering Pace, London, 1969, p. 292.

for professional positions throughout the inter-war years. In Austria, under the Dollfuss regime, an order was issued in 1933 which was very similar to the German law of 30 June, 1933, restricting opportunities for married women in the civil service¹. Germany was, in fact, in the majority camp in the 1930s, with the Nazis' more reactionary measures well according with the trend in the many other European countries which in the 1920s and 1930s were falling under right-wing dictatorships.

Reactionary measures included the attempt to eliminate abortion and contraception in the Third Reich, a policy that was being followed in other European countries, particularly the predominantly Roman Catholic ones. In France, for example, where there was, as in Germany, deep concern about the declining birth rate, abortion was illegal and harsh penalties were provided in the Penal Code for offenders. In 1920, a law was passed which provided that those manufacturing, selling or advocating contraceptive devices could be punished by a fine or imprisonment; it was to this obstacle to effective contraception that a rate of abortion estimated at between 300,000 and 500,000 per year during the 1930s was largely attributed. The one concession made was that therapeutic abortion - where the life of the mother was endangered - was permitted in 1939; but it was in the same year that the Code de la Famille sanctioned the imposition of more severe penalties for those selling abortifacients and contraceptives. No doubt influenced by war-time German policy², the French Government in 1942 made abortion a crime carrying very

1. Douie, op. cit., pp. 10-14, 20.

2. See above, Chapter 2, pp. 93-94.

severe penalties, including the possibility of the death penalty¹.

Toleration of abortion and free access to contraceptive advice were generally associated with Communism and, above all, Soviet Russia. Certainly, the Draconian penalties for abortion in Tsarist Russia were revoked by decree immediately after the Bolshevik Revolution, and in November 1920 abortion was formally legalised². But those who criticised this policy as "licentious" failed to add that the Soviet authorities regarded abortion as an evil, but one which would remain until adequate contraceptive provision obviated the need for it. It was less because this desideratum had been achieved than because of the growing international tension of the 1930s that abortion was banned in the 1936 Constitution of the Soviet Union; the raising of the birth rate became in the USSR, as in Hitler's Germany, a major official preoccupation, and Stalin's Government, again like Hitler's, offered at the same time a number of incentives for procreation. The carnage of the Second World War led to the provision of more, and more attractive, incentives in 1944 to encourage the citizens of the USSR to compensate for the immense losses, in the field and among civilians³.

To this extent, dictatorships of "left" and "right" followed similar, even identical, policies: Mussolini, too, imposed heavy penalties for abortion and the dissemination of contraceptive advice, and offered tax incentives and allowances to large families to encourage procreation. Again like Hitler and the Soviet regime he provided

1. C. Watson, "Birth Control and Abortion in France since 1939", Population Studies, 1951-52, pp. 261-68.

2. Halle, op. cit., p. 39.

3. Schlesinger, op. cit., pp. 269-79, 371-72.

improved welfare for mothers and infants, and attempted to remove the stigma from unmarried motherhood¹. If their attitude towards abortion and contraception was repressive and harsh, the dictators gave the impression - for bellicose motives, no doubt - that they were more enlightened in matters of social welfare than most democratic governments, including the British ones in the inter-war years.

C. Women in German Society in the 1930s

It is possible, but it would be misleading, to compile a balance-sheet of comparisons of women's position in 1930 with that in 1940. One could, for example, point to the contrast between the mounting opposition to the employment of married women in all areas, from industry to the professions, in the depression years at the start of the decade, and the growing urgency with which attempts were made to persuade married as well as single women to enter employment in the later 1930s, particularly once Germany went to war in the autumn of 1939. Indeed the former situation reveals prejudice, but if this was to some extent a legacy of the German past, in which working-class men as well as members of the middle and upper classes had disliked the appearance of women in large numbers in employment outside the home, its extent in the late 1920s and early 1930s was primarily an automatic response to the desperate economic situation in which job opportunities only diminished in the inexorable deflationary spiral. The changed attitude of the later 1930s was not

1. S. W. Halperin, Mussolini and Italian Fascism, New York, 1964, pp. 63-64.

I.L.O. Yearbook, 1937-38, pp. 260-62.

a reflection of enlightenment, of a desire to encourage women to realise their individual potential outside the home, but was rather indicative of the Government's desire to harness the nation's resources to the war-machine it was determined to construct. It is to be hoped that this study has shown that the situation in Germany in both 1930 and 1940 was highly abnormal, with an unprecedented shortage of jobs in the earlier year and a shortage of labour in the latter year which had developed quickly and showed signs of only becoming more acute. Thus, the extent of the prejudice in 1930 was abnormal in the Weimar context, just as the attempt ten years later to winkle housebound wives and mothers out of their domestic routine, and into the factory or the field, was an emergency measure as far as the Nazis were concerned, one which was not expected to continue once the national crisis of the war was over.

It is, however, possible only to surmise what the position of women in a "thousand-year Reich" would have been. Clearly, the Nazis' chief concern with women was for their capacity as child-bearers. Women with a full-time job might be reluctant to start or add to a family, and so women were to be encouraged to give up work to spend their time in the home, and to have many children in order to fill this time. Girls with an academic education might be reluctant to forego the opportunity of an interesting, responsible, and possibly well-paid career, even if they were married; accordingly, the emphasis was to be shifted away from the study of academic subjects, and where a preponderance of these remained in a curriculum, girls were also to be reminded of their maternal role at every opportunity, by taking compulsory courses in domestic science and by mixing socially in the organisations and usefully in the Labour Service with girls and

women from different backgrounds, who would be more interested in human relationships than in physics or foreign languages. Above all, women were to be kept physically healthy for child-bearing, and had therefore to be removed from work that was actually or potentially damaging to their reproductive capacity.

The motive was world domination; one of the means to this was to be a dramatic increase in the population, by means of creating an atmosphere in which procreation was considered natural and was rewarded in both material and psychological terms, and by attempting to make any means of conception control beyond total abstinence from sexual intercourse unavailable. But some of the side-effects were desirable. For example, the Nazis were considered puritanical in their condemnation of tobacco and alcohol - no doubt partly influenced by Hitler's abstinence from and aversion to them¹ - but they were medically correct in urging pregnant women not to smoke or drink alcohol. While the Nazis claimed to advocate temperance rather than abstinence with regard to alcohol, they were uncompromising in their opposition to cigarette smoking², at a time when it was accepted as fashionable among women as well as men, and before the health hazards directly connected with it were widely accepted. Foreigners were mildly amused by the zeal of some of the Party faithful in encouraging cafés to hang notices prominently on their premises bearing the legend "The German woman does not smoke"³, but it was the Rector

1. Kelley, op. cit., pp. 178, 190-91.

2. Erich Bruns, "Die Bekämpfung des Alcohol- und Nikotinmissbrauchs und die deutsche Frau", NS-Frauenwarte, 1938, p. 599.

3. "'Die deutsche Frau raucht nicht'", FZ, 1 May, 1933.

Elizabeth Wiskemann, The Europe I Saw, London, 1968, p. 34, relates how in Berlin in March 1933, a Storm Trooper "snatched a cigarette I was smoking from my mouth, informing me that the Führer disapproved of women smoking".

of Erlangen University, whose own field was medicine, who stated unequivocally that "For a woman, smoking is without doubt a vice"¹.

Another aspect of social mores which seemed to the Nazis to have implications for the birth rate was women's clothing. They condemned the foreign influences - of Paris and the United States - which, they claimed, had encouraged German women to adopt a style of dressing that was either frivolous or else an imitation of men's clothes, and was in any case decadent and not conducive to a healthy rate of population growth ("fortpflanzungsfeindlich"); the reasoning behind this assertion was not explained². To give guidance about the kind of clothing that was considered desirable in the Nazi State, the German Fashion Bureau was opened in Berlin in the spring of 1933, under the honorary presidency of Magda Goebbels³, who claimed that she was "trying to make the German woman more beautiful"⁴. At first, there was emphasis on the creation of a "German style" for German women⁵, but the women's magazines continued to carry fashion articles featuring clothes which were considered fashionable in Paris and London, and eventually in 1937 the DFW denied that there had been, or should be, attempts to devise a "German style"⁶. These ideas, however, were not new in the 1930s; during the Great War there had been criticism of the "improper" clothes some women and girls were wearing, and the call went out for the creation of a "German style". The

1. H. Wintz, "Die Frau und das Rauchen", Schriften des "Verein Deutsche Volksheilkunde e.V.", Nuremberg, 1938.
2. Agnes Gerlach, "Klarheit in Modefragen", DAZ, 23 July, 1933.
3. "Ein deutsches Mode-Amt", Vossische Zeitung, 11 June, 1933.
4. "Frau Goebbels über die deutsche Frauen", Vossische Zeitung, 6 July, 1933.
5. "Ziel und Aufbau des deutschen Modeamtes", FZ, 5 July, 1933.
6. "Keine eigene 'Deutsche Mode'", FZ, 23 April, 1937.

objections were against something which was clearly too terrible to be described explicitly, but the implication was that new styles were being adopted which were at once unpatriotic - presumably imported from enemy countries - and morally risky¹.

The ideal type of woman in Nazi theory was the peasant wife, whose peaceful, wholesome life was devoted to her work on the land and, above all, her family. The picture of this woman at her spinning-wheel² was offered as the alternative to the city-bred chic sophisticates of the decadent 1920s. To encourage the simple perfection embodied - it was quite unrealistically believed - in this rural figure, edicts were issued castigating and ridiculing those women who "shave their eyebrows, use rouge, dye their hair" in an altogether foreign manner³. The Party's puritans conducted a vigorous campaign against cosmetics, although Hitler was apparently not averse to women's using them⁴. Himmler, however, maintained a strict attitude, giving instructions that the mothers in the SS's Lebensborn homes should not be permitted to use lipstick, to paint their nails, or to shave their eyebrows⁵. It was further made clear

1. "Planmässiger Kampf gegen Würdelosigkeit im weiblichen Geschlecht, von einem Beobachter am Wege", Frankfurter Zeitgemässe Broschüren, January 1916, pp. 2-4.
2. Hildegard von Rheden, "Bauerlicher Hausfleiss aus Blut und Boden", VB, 2 February, 1936.
3. "Muckertum und geschminkten Frauen", DAZ, 15 November, 1933.
4. Heinrich Hoffmann, Hitler was my Friend, London, 1955, pp. 141-42, describes Hitler's taste in women's appearance thus: "If he had any preference at all, then I should say that it was a leaning towards the elegant, slim figure. Nor did he object to lipstick and painted fingernails, which were so scornfully castigated in Party circles".
5. IfZ, Fa 202, frame 78, letter from "Dr. E." to the Council of Lebensborn, 6 September, 1940.

that the SS expected the future wives of its members to demonstrate their wholesomeness by achieving the Reich Sport Medal, since the kind of woman who was suitable for the nation's élite to marry was not the one

"who can dance nicely through five-o'clock teas, but who has proved her fitness by sports activity. For good health, the javelin or the pole-vault are of more value than the lipstick"¹.

This motif ran throughout Nazi speeches about women² - naturally enough, since it was directly relevant to the function regarded as most important, child-bearing, the function to which all Nazi thought about women was ultimately related.

It is this consistent obsession that renders comprehensible some of the apparent inconsistencies in Nazi thought and practice; for example, while some Nazis undoubtedly took a more puritanical view of social and sexual life than others, there was general acceptance that the family was the essential basic unit of society, to be maintained and protected by every possible means. But the very existence of the family was an obstacle to the Nazis' attempt at totalitarian control, and so the Nazi organisations had to try to exert some influence over individual members of the family in the hope that the family unit as a whole would be permeated by National Socialist ideas and would grow in corporate loyalty to the Nazi regime. A strict line of demarcation was, however, to be drawn

1. SS Obergruppenführer Jeckeln, "Ein Wort an die Frauen", FZ, 1 June, 1937.

2. E.g., Gertrud Scholtz-Klink, "Die Frau im nationalsozialistischen Staat", VB, 9 September, 1934.

"Die Körpererschulung und deren Wichtigkeit für die Frauen", NS-Frauenwarte, 1938, p. 587.

between business and pleasure: Hess repeatedly reminded Party members that they were not allowed to wear Party uniform when out on social occasions with women, unless the function was an official one to which wives were invited. Hess particularly condemned those who wore Party uniform when taking their wives for a ride in a car, and ordered that on no account was a woman to be driven in an open car with her husband when he was in uniform¹. This potential source of petty family friction was, however, trivial compared with the apparent threat to the family unit by some Nazi social policies.

The more tolerant attitude towards unmarried motherhood² and the introduction of "irretrievable breakdown" as a ground for divorce³ in the Third Reich alarmed some of those who had believed Nazi promises of restoring respectability to German life after the permissiveness of the Weimar Republic. They were, in fact, policies which were more similar to those of liberals and even Communists than to the standard Christian morality of those conservatives who had supported Hitler in preference to socialists of any colour. No doubt Himmler and the SS and Hess were in a minority in the NSDAP in positively encouraging unmarried motherhood, but the Party clearly, after some initial hesitation, moved to a position where it accepted that motherhood was desirable, therefore those women who became mothers out of wedlock should not be discriminated against, even if they should neither be acclaimed as examples worthy of imitation. The result was

1. IfZ, Db 15.02, "Anordnung 214/35", 5 November, 1935, signed by Hess, with express orders that it was not for publication.

2. See above, Chapter 2, pp. 99-110.

3. Ibid., pp. 72-73.

more humane treatment of unmarried mothers, of the kind advocated particularly by radical feminists both before and after the Great War and by Communists, in imitation of the Soviet Russian example. On the whole, the Nazis recognised that there was an implicit contradiction in their claim to be upholding the family unit and their attempt to diminish prejudice against the unmarried mother; but their overriding desire for children led them to welcome any "racially valuable" child, regardless of the marital status of its parents, and therefore to value the parents themselves.

Population policy, again, underlay the peculiar situation which arose from the Nazis' being more concerned with the health and welfare of women workers than some of the avowed champions of women's rights. While the Communists and the Socialists were, like the Nazis, anxious to develop schemes of labour protection for women, particularly for pregnant women and nursing mothers, the radical feminists of the Open Door International, who were the first to claim that the Nazis had no regard for women and aimed to subject them fully to male domination, denied that special provision for women's welfare was anything other than a device for discriminating against women¹. Thus, the most militant feminists were prepared to countenance a situation where women and girls were free to work during the day or at night for as many hours as they chose, regardless of the damage they might do to their health. Indeed, they, along with the Communists, demanded equal pay for equal work, which might have discouraged employers from using women for heavy work since men were more obviously fitted for it; but it was the Nazis who actually introduced

1. See above, Chapter 3, p. 119.

equal pay in some cases for this very purpose¹. And the radical feminists never suggested that their aim in agitating for equal pay was to discourage employers from using female labour on the same terms as male. In the end - always for the natalist motive - the Nazis showed more concern for the physical well-being of women.

Perhaps this helps to account for the acceptance of the Nazis by women generally, and even by some of those who had been opposed to the Nazis in the pre-1933 period. Three former DVP Reichstag deputies, Doris Hertwig-Bunger², Elsa Matz³ and Clara Mende⁴, apparently came to terms with the regime to the extent of applying for Party membership and working in Nazi organisations. Doris Hertwig-Bunger was admitted to the NSDAP in 1937, and was also a member of other organisations, including the NSF, in which she was recognised as a particularly active and diligent member, thoroughly "politically reliable"⁵. Elsa Matz became a Party member as early as May 1933, on the recommendation of the Berlin Gau leadership of the NSDAP⁶. Clara Mende had been too outspoken against the Nazis before 1933 to be admitted to the Party even in 1938, but she had been a

1. Ibid., p. 144.

2. Born in 1882, a senior school teacher and leader of women's organisations in the Weimar period. Horkenbach, op. cit., p. 681.

3. Born in 1881, a senior school teacher and president of the DVP's Women's Committee. Reichstags-Handbuch, Berlin, 1930, p. 417.

4. Born in 1869, headmistress of a domestic science school and adviser in the Ministry of Economics in 1929-32. Horkenbach, op. cit., p. 714.

5. BDC, Gestapo report on Doris Hertwig-Bunger, 27 December, 1940.

6. Ibid., Partei-Kanzlei Korrespondenz, letter to the Gauschatzmeister of Mark Brandenburg, 5 February, 1940.

member of the NSF since 1934 and was the Berlin Gau's expert on domestic science training in the NSV¹. If the DVP was in truth a conservative party, these women must nevertheless have had to compromise their former views in order to co-operate with the Nazi regime to the extent that they did; no doubt personal ambition facilitated this, but it seems reasonable to infer that they also found elements in Nazism which positively, and not necessarily wrongly, recommended themselves to them.

There were, of course, those who could not fully accept the Nazi system, and who would never be fully acceptable to the Nazis. Of those who were so unacceptable as to be unable to continue to work in Germany and who were also possibly in personal danger, some, like Marie Juchacz² and Anna Siemsen³, both of the SPD, returned to Germany after exile abroad during the Third Reich, while others, like Alice Salomon⁴, remained abroad for the rest of their lives. Of those who stayed, often at great personal risk, Hilde Benjamin, the former lawyer who suffered imprisonment for her part in the Communist underground, was given the position of attorney general in Berlin under the Soviet Military Administration in 1945⁵. Marie-Elisabeth Lüders, one of Gertrud Bäumer's associates, was also imprisoned because of some

1. Ibid., Gestapo report to the President of the Reich Chamber of Journalists, 26 April, 1938.

2. Max Schwarz, MdR, Hanover, 1965, p. 684.

3. Kosch, op. cit., p. 1110.

4. Ibid., p. 1060.

5. Stockhorst, op. cit., p. 51.

of the material she had published; after the war, she worked with the United States' occupation authorities before returning to politics as a Free Democrat. As the oldest member of the Bundestag in 1953, she was its President, as well as being Honorary President of the Free Democratic Party¹.

Gertrud Bäumer herself seems to have managed to arrive at a modus vivendi with the Nazi regime. Indeed, she continued to criticise it in her private correspondence, but even there she insisted that there were aspects of National Socialism that were acceptable; this attitude drew criticism from her friend Dorothee von Velsen, who objected above all to the fundamental lack of freedom in the Nazi State, as well as to the anti-semitism, brutality and opportunism of the regime. If open opposition was impossible, Dorothee von Velsen argued that that was no reason to co-operate with Gertrud Scholtz-Klink; "silent opposition" was, she felt, the only honourable course².

Gertrud Bäumer, however, still looked for signs of feminism in the Nazi women's organisation, claiming to discern traces of it among the leaders of the Women's Labour Service in 1940³, and with the hope of encouraging a sense of female independence and solidarity she insisted that her magazine, Die Frau, must abstain from open criticism - even of the SS's encouragement to girls to procreate outside marriage⁴ - and political comment of any kind. No doubt she was sensible to be cautious,

1. Kosch, op. cit., pp. 792-93.

2. BA, Kl.Erw., no. 296-(1), letter from Dorothee von Velsen to Gertrud Bäumer, 21 November, 1936.

3. Ibid., no. 267-(2), letter from Gertrud Bäumer to Emmy Beckmann, 17 October, 1940.

4. Ibid., no. 296-(1), letter from Gertrud Bäumer to Dorothee von Velsen, 4 April, 1940.

having been struck off the list of those permitted to edit magazines for almost two years¹, but her apparent readiness to co-operate with the National Women's Leadership, albeit on minor matters², suggests something more than prudence. Her priority was to try to keep the spirit and activity of the old Women's Movement alive at all costs, in however small a way, and to try to infiltrate some of its ideas into Frau Scholtz-Klink's organisation. She rather deluded herself in imagining that this was possible - or relevant, given the lack of influence of the Nazi women's organisation. And her policy here was little understood and less welcomed by those women who had formerly admired and supported her and who started from the premise that National Socialism was inherently evil, and that any kind of compromise with it was out of the question³.

Perhaps the failure to reconstruct a Women's Movement out of the remains of Gertrud Bäumer's organisation after the Second World War was a reflection of its being discredited by at least tacit co-operation with the Nazis. Certainly, Gertrud Bäumer herself did

1. Beckmann, op. cit., letter from Gertrud Bäumer to Emmy Beckmann, May 1935 (exact date not given), p. 82.

BA, op. cit., no. 267-(1), letter from Gertrud Bäumer to Emmy Beckmann, 19 March, 1937.

2. Ibid., letter from Gertrud Bäumer to Emmy Beckmann, 14 September, 1938.

Ibid., no. 267-(2), letter of 17 October, 1940.

3. Ibid., no. 296-(1), letter from Dorothee von Velsen to Gertrud Bäumer, 24 May, 1939.

Ibid., letter from Dorothee von Velsen to Gertrud Bäumer, 11 April, 1940.

not return to a position of prominence, dying in 1954 at the age of eighty¹. But her concern with the young generation of women² was perhaps belated, since the Women's Movement had suffered from a generation problem before the Nazi takeover of power, and might in any case have died out with its old leadership. There was, in fact, a vacuum in women's organisational life after 1945, until new groupings emerged, since Frau Scholtz-Klink's organisation was, naturally, disbanded and discredited. The National Women's Leader, too, disappeared into obscurity, after successfully evading arrest with her third husband, former SS officer Heissmeyer, until March 1948, and then serving an eighteen-month sentence after trial by a French military court³.

It is one of the many ironies of National Socialism that its policies and its defeat created a situation in which discrimination against women in many areas, particularly in employment, was not a practical proposition. The need for many women to assume the role of breadwinner after the Second World War, in the absence of men who were dead, incapacitated, or in prison, led to the opening up of new opportunities for women in the Federal Republic⁴. In the Democratic Republic, that which so many of the Nazis' supporters had feared above all, and which the Nazis had been pledged to prevent, the victory of Communism, has meant that there has been a much more

1. Das Grosse Brockhaus, 1967, vol. 2, p. 393.

2. BA, op. cit., no. 267-(2), letter from Gertrud Bäumer to Emmy Beckmann, 17 October, 1940.

3. Wiener Library Personality File G15, reports on Gertrud Scholtz-Klink in several newspapers, e.g., New York Times, 3 February, 1948; Neue Zeitung, 18 November, 1948, Die Welt, 18 November, 1949; New York Herald Tribune, 18 November, 1949.

4. B. Rich, "Civil Liberties in Germany", Political Science Quarterly, 1950, p. 81.

decisive change of policy, so that women have - within the limits of a new dictatorship - equal rights and equality of opportunity¹. The Nazis, then, unwittingly acted as the agents of the kind of changes they had aimed to prevent or reverse, and women became more self-reliant and were accorded a greater degree of legal and social equality. But the Nazis had certainly given the impression of arresting developments in the direction of greater equality for women; it remains to decide how far this was true.

In the first place, progress was made in improving opportunities for women even before 1914, notably in education; "emancipation" did not suddenly begin in 1918. Then, after the Great War far less progress was made than feminists had hoped and conservatives had feared. Indeed, certain areas of activity were opened to women for the first time, including full participation in politics and entry to the legal profession. But the progress made in winning real influence for women in politics and significant representation for them in professions other than teaching - where they were already well-established - was slow and gradual, as it was bound to be, while the provisions of the Imperial Civil Code continued to affirm the superiority of the male sex in society, and especially in marriage. In addition, no sooner were modest reforms introduced after the Great War than the forces of reaction asserted themselves, so that German women - insofar as they were interested - were, like the nation as a whole, bitterly divided between those who resented even cautious change, associating it with "Bolshevism", and those who poured contempt on the small improvements that were effected. Even moderate feminists, who accepted that evolution was the best course,

1. David Childs, East Germany, New York, 1969, p. 219.

but a slow one, began to be disillusioned by the later 1920s, and to be alarmed in the early 1930s when the effects of the depression seemed to many justification - or an excuse - for a retreat from the Weimar Constitution's commitment to equal rights for members of both sexes. The conservatives, the Churches, and even some trade unionists were very ready to see in, for example, deliberate discrimination against the employed married woman the solution to Germany's problems which were, in the view of the Churches and the conservatives, at least, not merely of an economic nature but political and moral as well.

Thus, the clock was stopped not in 1933 but in 1930. The Nazis, with their at times weird backward-looking philosophy, benefited from attitudes which had already developed and hardened, and found at least tacit - and often open - support for their promised policy of restoring women to a position of security, decency and domesticity. But it was not their intention, they repeatedly asserted, to restrict women to the traditional "three K's" - "Kinder, Küche, Kirche" (nursery, kitchen, church)¹ - as conservatives hoped. Once again, German conservatives had mistaken the Nazis for old-style, nationalist reactionaries like themselves, failing to comprehend the essentially revolutionary nature of Nazism. Certainly, in the Nazi State women were to concern themselves to a considerable degree with children and with household matters; but a regime which aspired to totalitarian control had to urge all its citizens to look outward from their private

1. The "three K's" appear in many different places, in a variety of forms. The one given is the most common of these. In Imperial times, mention was sometimes made of "four K's", the additional one being for "Kaiser".

lives, to surrender their privacy and allow themselves to be imbued with the Nazi Weltanschauung, and to accept the primacy of the needs of the State as interpreted by the Nazi leadership. Thus, German women were to be less "requisites of German men"¹ than - like German men - agents at the disposal of the Nazi regime. It was crucial to women's position that the needs of the regime became such that women could be discriminated against to only a very limited extent.

In the Third Reich, men were, after all, controlled and confined to the same extent as women, and often, given the relative immunity of the housewife from official surveillance, even more. If men monopolised positions of power in the Nazi State, only a minority of men exercised power, and the great mass of men were excluded in the same way as women. Male and female opponents and victims of Nazi racist policies were discriminated against and persecuted on an equal basis. Certainly the Nazis were determined to persuade as many women as possible - in the early years, at least - that their natural sphere of activity was the home and family; but it is often overlooked that the majority of women choose to marry and have children in the absence of official pressure to do so. The Nazis were starting their campaign with the advantage of women's biological character and natural disposition on their side. Their aim was to reverse the evident trend towards contempt for the "nur-Hausfrau" (the woman who is "only a housewife"), which was a side-effect of the provision of more opportunities for women outside the

1. Hans-Jochen Gamm, Der Flüsterwitz im Dritten Reich, Munich, 1966, p. 50, gives one of the popular corruptions of the BdM's initials as "Bedarfsartikel deutscher Männer".

home. In this, they to some extent succeeded; where they were wrong was in trying to coerce women into complying with their policy, by limiting opportunities outside the home and by trying to remove all means of birth control.

Attempts to limit opportunities for women outside the home were made, at a time when the massive unemployment problem made them doubly attractive. But the change which came in the economic situation in the mid-1930s made even the campaign against employed married women first redundant and then positively harmful. Similarly, the steps taken to reduce the academic content of girls' school curricula - a reaction against the strong emphasis there had been on academic ability after the Great War - proved to be damaging even before the Second World War gave rise to an urgent demand for girl students in all disciplines. In the later 1930s, women were not only to be given the opportunity to work and to study, whether they were married or single, but were to be positively encouraged to do these things. The motive was, as ever, the serving of the needs of the Nazi State at the time, not the improvement of opportunities for women; but such an improvement was in fact a result. The unrealistic and purely ideologically-motivated barriers to women's advancement in the highest échelons of the civil service and to the practice of law by women were indeed indicative of what was, in the Nazi view, ideal, and of what would no doubt have been their aim in the "thousand-year Reich", if other policies had permitted it. But these instances were exceptions, and the result of the abnormal 1930s - abnormal in political and economic terms and culminating in war - was that women's position in employment outside the home, including the professions as a whole, was consolidated, not eroded, while, in addition, the status of the housewife and mother was raised.

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Schumacher Sammlung, no. 230 (NS Frauen)

is a rich source of information. Substantial parts of the Schumacher Sammlung, 230, are to be found in the Bundesarchiv and the Berlin Document Center. Chapter 6, particularly, draws heavily on this source. The NSDAP Hauptarchiv, to be found in the archive of the Wiener Library, provides the only other collection of material about women, and it is very limited in both size and scope. Otherwise, the documentary material relating to women in Germany is, while plentiful, very scattered indeed. To some extent in the Bundesarchiv, and more particularly in the Institut für Zeitgeschichte, it has been necessary to sift through a large mass of material in order to discover a few relevant documents. This has, however, sometimes been very rewarding; the outstanding example of this is the reports of Himmler's security agents throughout Germany which were made regularly from October 1939. Dr. Heinz Boberach has published some of those in the Bundesarchiv, but a large mass remains there, in the R58 files, while there is a particularly rich collection of these documents in the Institut für Zeitgeschichte, on the MA 441 rolls of microfilm. These shed considerable illumination on women's position in the early years of the war, particularly with regard to employment. The information about individual women provided by the records of the Berlin Document Center have been particularly valuable, while the correspondence of Gertrud Bäumer, in the Bundesarchiv, has also been a useful source.

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	257	- Hitler Jugend
	262	- Arbeitsdienst
	279-1	- NSDStB
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R18	Reichsministerium des Innern	
R22	Reichsjustizministerium	
R36	Deutscher Gemeindetag	
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Glossary and List of
Abbreviations used in the Text and in Footnotes

ADGB	Allgemeiner Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund (General German Trade Union Association), trade union combine associated with the SPD
ADLV	Allgemeiner Deutscher Lehrerinnenverein (General Union of German Women Teachers)
AfB	Archiv für Bevölkerungspolitik, Sexualethik und Familienkunde (periodical)
AfFr	Archiv für Frauenkunde und Eugenetik (periodical)
AMSO	Arbeitsgemeinschaft marxistischer Sozialarbeiter (Association of Marxist Social Workers), affiliate of the KPD
ANSt	Arbeitsgemeinschaft nationalsozialistischer Studentinnen (Association of National Socialist Girl Students)
AOPG	Akten des Obersten Parteigerichts (Proceedings of the NSDAP's High Court), found in the Berlin Document Center
ARSO	Arbeitsgemeinschaft sozialpolitischer Organisationen (Association of Social Policy Organisations), affiliate of the KPD
BA	Bundesarchiv, Koblenz
BDC	Berlin Document Center
BDF	Bund Deutscher Frauenvereine (Federation of German Women's Associations)
BdM (BDM)	Bund deutscher Mädel (League of German Girls) branch of the Hitler Youth for girls aged from 14 to 18 or 21
BF	Die Bayerische Frau (women's magazine)
BKL	Bund Königin Luise (Queen Luise League), conservative women's organisation
BziL	Bericht zur innenpolitischen Lage (early name for the reports of Himmler's security agents)
DAF	Deutsche Arbeitsfront (German Labour Front)
DDP	Deutsche Demokratische Partei (German Democratic Party - from 1930, German State Party, as Deutsche Staatspartei)

DFO	Deutscher Frauenorden (German Women's Order), the first Nazi women's organisation, founded and led by Elsbeth Zander
DFW	Deutsches Frauenwerk (German Women's Work), the Nazi-led national organisation for women in the Third Reich
DMAd	Deutsche Mädchenbildung (periodical)
DNVP	Deutschnationale Volkspartei (German Nationalist People's Party)
Doppelverdiener	the second earner in a family, generally used to describe a working married woman
DS	Der Deutsche Student (periodical)
DVP	Deutsche Volkspartei (German People's Party)
DWEuV	Deutsche Wissenschaft, Erziehung und Volksbildung (periodical), the Reich Ministry of Education's gazette
Fis	Die Frau im Staat (periodical), radical feminist magazine
FK	Frauenkultur im Deutschen Frauenwerk (periodical), official magazine of the DFW
FZ	Frankfurter Zeitung (newspaper)
Gau	administrative unit, most often applied to a province of the NSDAP's organisation. There were 32 Gaue of the NSDAP in 1933, and 40 in the Greater German Reich of 1939
HA	NSDAP Hauptarchiv
IfZ	Institut für Zeitgeschichte Archiv
ILO	International Labour Organisation
ILR	International Labour Review (periodical)
Informations- dienst...	Informationsdienst für die soziale Arbeit der NSV (found in BA, NSD 30/1836)
JADG	Jahrbuch des Allgemeinen Deutschen Gewerkschaftsbundes (periodical)
Kl.Erw.	Kleine Erwerbungen (small collections), catalogue description in BA, under which Gertrud Bäumer's letters are found

KPD	Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands (German Communist Party)
Kreis	district - administrative unit of the NSDAP into which the Gaue were divided
Machtübernahme	the "takeover of power" by the Nazis, generally referring to Hitler's appointment as Chancellor on 30 January, 1933, and on the whole preferred by the Nazis to the term "Machtergreifung", the "seizure of power"
MadR	Meldungen aus dem Reich (reports of Himmler's security agents throughout Germany, from late 1939)
n.d.	date of publication not given
n.p.	place of publication not given
NSBO	Nationalsozialistische Betriebszellenorganisation (National Socialist Factory Cell Organisation)
NSDAP	Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (National Socialist German Workers' Party - the Nazi Party)
NSDStB	Nationalsozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund (National Socialist Students' Association)
NSF	Nationalsozialistische Frauenschaft (National Socialist Women's Organisation)
NSLB	Nationalsozialistischer Lehrerbund (National Socialist Teachers' League)
NSRB	Nationalsozialistischer Rechtswahrerbund (National Socialist Lawyers' League), formerly the Bund Nationalsozialistischer Deutscher Juristen - name changed in 1936
NSV	Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt (National Socialist People's Welfare), the national welfare organisation in the Third Reich
ODI	Open Door International for the Emancipation of the Woman Worker (radical feminist organisation)
Ortsgruppe	local branch of the NSDAP, the subdivision of the Kreis
RAB	Reichsarbeitsblatt (periodical), the Reich Ministry of Labour's gazette

RDB	Reichsbund der Deutschen Beamten (National Association of German Civil Servants), the only civil servants' union in the Third Reich
RdK	Reichsbund der Kinderreichen Deutschlands zum Schutz der Familie (pro-natalist national organisation of large families, founded in 1923 and taken over by the Nazis)
Reichsfrauen- führerin	National Women's Leader, the title conferred on Gertrud Scholtz-Klink in November 1934
RGB	Reichsgesetzblatt (periodical), official publication of German federal statutes and decrees
RGÖ	Revolutionäre Gewerkschafts-Op ^o sition (Revolutionary Trade Union Opposition), Communist trade union group, founded in 1929
RMdI/NsdL	Nachrichtensammelstelle im Reichsministerium des Innern an die Nachrichtenstellen der Länder, the confidential reports made by the Reich Ministry of the Interior to the Land information offices about KPD activities, 1931-33, found in the BA, R58 files
SA	Sturm Abteilungen (Nazi storm troopers)
Slg.Sch.	Schumacher Sammlung (collection of documents about Nazi organisations and projects, found in BA and BDC)
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (German Social Democratic Party)
SS	Schutzstaffeln (Nazi élite bodyguard formations, under the leadership of Heinrich Himmler)
St.D.R.	Statistik des Deutschen Reiches (periodical)
St.J.	Statistisches Jahrbuch für das Deutsche Reich (periodical)
VB	Völkischer Beobachter (official Nazi Party newspaper)
VDEL	Verein Deutscher Evangelischer Lehrerinnen (Union of German Evangelical Women Teachers)
VjZ	Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte (periodical)
VkdL	Verein katholischer deutscher Lehrerinnen (Union of Catholic German Women Teachers)
WILPF	Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (founded at The Hague, 1915)
WuS	Wirtschaft und Statistik (periodical)